

IRISH 1798 - DUBLIN

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R O B E R T E M M E T,

By * * * *

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH,

BY

J O H N P. L E O N A R D.

BELFAST:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY D. HOLLAND,
AT THE "ULSTERMAN" OFFICE,
AND SOLD BY ALL BOOKSELLERS.

1858.

[*Sole Authorised Translation, with Permission of the Authoress.*]

DA 948.6. E5H3 1858x

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

THE book on Robert Emmet, which is here translated, was published in Paris a few months ago. It has already reached a second edition. The popularity so rapidly attained by the work in France may be attributed chiefly to its literary merits and the interesting character of the story, and in some measure to the sympathy which still exists in that country for everything relative to Ireland.

As Translator, I have been careful to adhere faithfully to the Author's meaning, and have even endeavoured to adhere to the style, as exactly as the difference of the two languages would allow. I am sensible how imperfectly the latter part of my duties has been performed, and how much of the beauty of the original must be lost to the reader of my English version.

But though the literary merit of the accomplished writer cannot be fully appreciated in the translation, it will, however, exhibit her great qualifications for judging human character and reasoning on human institutions. We seldom find united such penetration of intellect with such generosity of spirit, such sobriety of judgment with such ardent sympathy for the heroic; and we may safely say that the character of the noble patriot was never

more faithfully portrayed, nor his motives and actions more fully justified.

Such homage paid to patriotism and genius, coming from the very highest and purest source, must be read with interest and pleasure by every Irishman possessing a spark of nationality.

The following lines, by which a talented writer ends his review of the book, will show the effect it has produced, and how much the name of Robert Emmet is now honoured and respected in France. They will also prove that, if the work, in its new form, does not obtain in Emmet's own country that admiration so liberally bestowed on it abroad, the fault must alone be attributed to the translator :—

“Le pieux hommage rendu à la mémoire de Robert Emmet, par l'Irlande et par l'Amerique, la France, elle aussi le lui devait. Elle ne le lui doit plus. Ce livre pensé, écrit avec le cœur, est digne du mort qu'il immortalise. Les nobles émotions qu'il souleve a chaque page sont de celles qui font revivre les âmes mortes.”*

J. P. L. .

* Chassin Journal de l'Instruction Publique, March, 1858.

A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER.

MANY who know me may wonder why I, a *Litterateur* and Journalist only, should appear in the capacity of Printer and Publisher, in connection with this admirable little volume : a tribute of French genius to Irish patriotism and truth.

My answer is brief : I undertook the publication because no one else would. In England, publishers refused the work, lest this French eulogy of a young Irish martyr-patriot should injure the “cordial alliance.” In Dublin, those whose trade is printing and publishing feared the risk, with the petty trader’s timidity—some, too, would not offend “the Castle.”

In this emergency, I (though neither printer nor publisher) undertook the risk, that so good a book might not be lost to the Irish public.

D. HOLLAND.

ERRATA.

IN the original work the authoress has fallen into a few errors of fact and date, all of which we have not been able to correct in the translation. The following are among the most important :—

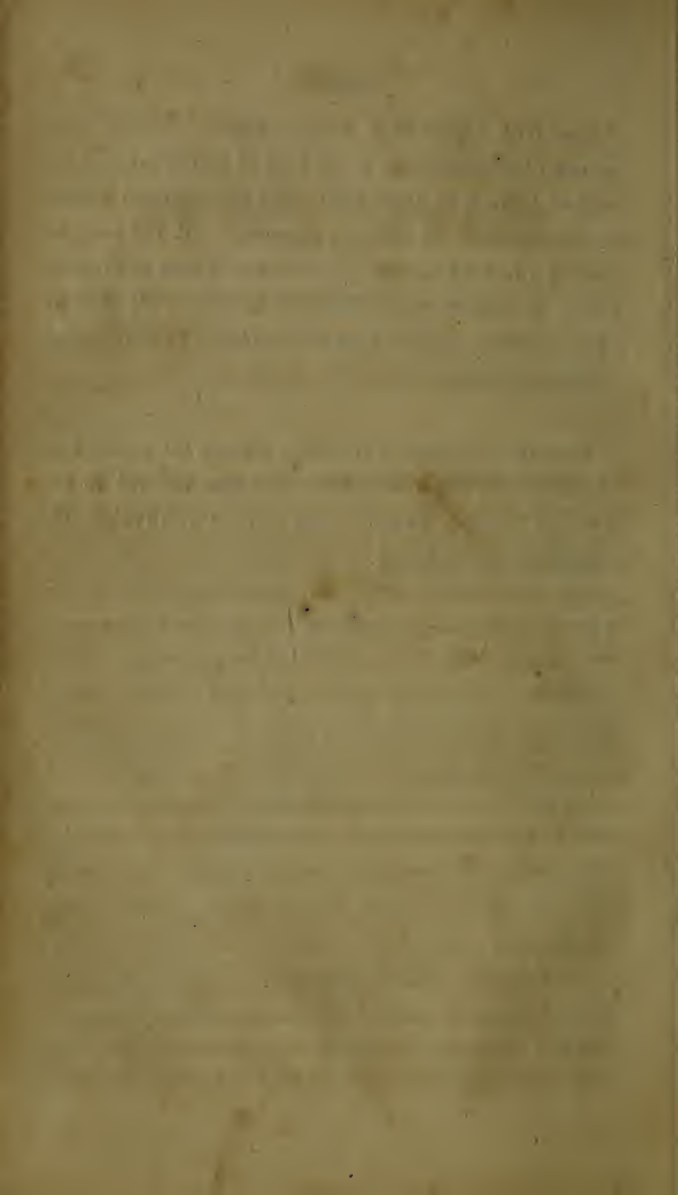
PAGE 56.—John Allen did not accompany Robert Emmet in his tour upon the Continent. Robert Emmet did not go to Cadiz at all. Hugh Wilson, who had been a fellow-prisoner of Thomas Addis Emmet in Dublin, and afterwards at Fort-George, in Scotland, accompanied Robert Emmet from Holland to Paris. Mr. Wilson, when he became a United Irishman, held a high place in the Bank of Ireland ; and his reputation as a man of business readily obtained for him, when he became an exile, a situation in the banking-house of the Messrs. Johnston, of Bordeaux, one of the first in that city. It was to the care of Mr. Wilson that Robert Emmet consigned his confidential friend and agent, Mr. Byrne, when, in 1803, after the failure of his projects, he sent him with his last instructions to his brother, Thomas Addis Emmet, then in France.

John Allen, in company with William Dowdall, escaped from Ireland in 1803, and went to Cadiz. On arriving in France, they were both sent to Morlaix, to make part

ERRATA.

of the Irish Legion then forming there. Captain Allen mounted the breach first, at the head of his company, at the siege of Astorga, in April, 1810. He distinguished himself in the campaign of 1813, in Germany. At the siege of Antwerp, in 1814, he was promoted to the rank of superior officer, by Carnot, who commanded in chief. He died at Caen, in 1856. Captain Dowdall was killed at the siege of Hushing, in 1809.

PAGE 68.—In place of *Hamilton Rowan*, the person here meant was *William Hamilton*. He was married to the niece of Thomas Russell. He was no relative to the Hamilton Rowan family.



ROBERT EMMET.

I want a hero : an uncommon want.

BYRON.

I.

OF ROBERT EMMET, who in France knows anything? Some few, perhaps, have a vague recollection of his melancholy fate. Yet, little more than fifty years have passed since, at the early age of twenty-five, he died on the scaffold ; and individuals who knew him are still alive. Ireland and America honour his memory as that of a martyr for Liberty. His life was short, it is true, and occupies no great space in history. But, thanks to the poetry of Thomas Moore, and some touching pages by Washington Irving, that episode of the troubles of Ireland in which Robert Emmet figured is become a sort of legend of heroism and romance. It has struck me that, even after what has been done by the Irish poet and the American essayist, a simple biography, with no other merit than historic accuracy, cannot fail to excite interest. Poetry vainly strives to equal the power of truth ; human life in its poignant reality is more romantic than romance, and more tragic than tragedy.

Robert Emmet, the hero of this history, was born in 1778. His family, ancient and honourable, was originally from the County of Cork. It belonged to the gentry, the class from which distinguished men are generally recruited

in Ireland and in England. His father, in 1760, immediately after his marriage, settled in Dublin. By his wife, Elizabeth Temple (1), he had three sons, all of them destined to play a distinguished part, and to leave remarkable names in the annals of their country (2). The eldest, Temple Emmet, was called to the Irish Bar in 1781; and, during the seven years, during which his career lasted, (he died at thirty,) he raised himself to the first rank both as an orator and a lawyer. Endowed with talents of a less brilliant order, but still possessed of intellectual powers not less remarkable than these of his elder brother, Thomas Addis Emmet studied in Scotland, at the University of Edinburgh, at a period when that famous school possessed professors and pupils of whom many were destined to be great. Sir James Mackintosh was the fellow-student and friend of Thomas; and in his memoirs he often speaks of Emmet in terms of praise, and states that he had strongly urged him to embrace the profession of the Law. Thomas Emmet followed his advice, and studied Law in London. It was, however, rather as a politician than as a lawyer that he was one day to make himself known in Ireland; but in America, the country of his exile and adoption, he raised himself to the first rank at the Bar, and thus confirmed the prophetic anticipation of his fellow-student.

But the most celebrated of the three brothers, the one

(1) Miss Temple was a descendant of Sir William Temple, a celebrated writer and statesman in the reign of William III.

(2) Temple Emmet, Thomas Addis Emmet, Robert Emmet. He also had a daughter, Mrs. Holmes, who, in that highly-gifted family, was not inferior to her brothers either in talent or the energy of her convictions. A pamphlet, without the author's name, published at the time of the Union, was written by her.—(*United Irishmen*: Madden.)

whose genius, character, and tragic fate were to excite the interest of posterity, by more titles than one, was the young and unfortunate Robert Emmet.

If it be true, as has been remarked, that distinguished men are especially "the sons of their mothers," it would be interesting to trace, in the particular constitution of their intellect and character, that feminine element which often seems in strange contrast with the destiny of their lives. Robert Emmet's father was a man of ordinary, but vigorous, understanding; some of his mother's letters, published in the life of Thomas Addis Emmet (3), reveal to us a delicate and proud nature, a lively sensibility, and a penetrating intellect. Of her three children, Robert, the youngest, resembled her most; he was born long after the others, when her youth was already past, and when her eldest sons had reached the age of manhood; the love which she bore to this her third, and last born, son, inspired her with especial solicitude, to which he responded even beyond all her expectations. He exhibited at an early age rare and brilliant faculties, a singular blending of enthusiasm and sagacity, a great power of concentration, an ardent and poetical fancy, combined with an exact and penetrating intellect—which made him equally fit for literary and scientific pursuits. He distinguished himself, also, by an indomitable energy of will, united to great gentleness of disposition,—a combination always typical of the truly

(3) Madden: *The United Irishmen; their Lives and Times*.—Articles: *Thomas Addis Emmet, Robert Emmet*. Dr. Madden has published the lives of the principal chiefs of the United Irishmen. In the biography of Robert and of Thomas Addis Emmet may be found perfectly accurate information respecting those two celebrated men, drawn from the best sources, and collected with a pious respect for their memories.

heroic character. It is not uninteresting to observe how the first trials of superior minds are marked even from childhood ; and Madden relates in the Life of Robert Emmet, an anecdote puerile in appearance, but which manifests the force of his will, and the keenness of his intellect. From an early period he had a passion for the severe sciences. Mathematics and Chemistry were, from the age of twelve years, his favourite studies. He was accustomed to make chemical experiments in his father's house. After one of these experiments, he applied himself to study a book on Algebra, and endeavoured to solve a problem, which, by the author's admission, was of extreme difficulty. Absorbed in his study, he imprudently raised his hand to his mouth, and poisoned himself with some corrosive sublimate, which he had been handling a few moments before. The violent pain he felt immediately informed him of his danger, and the cause of his sufferings. Nevertheless, fearing that, as a punishment for his imprudence he should for the future be forbidden to make those dangerous experiments, he was not willing to let anybody know it ; but went down to his father's library, took a volume of the Encyclopedia, and found, under the article Poison, that chalk, mixed with water, was recommended as a remedy in such cases. Recollecting that he had seen some chalk in a coach-house on the premises, he went down to the yard, broke in the door of the coach-house, which was closed, succeeded in finding the chalk, made use of it, and tranquilly resumed the study of the problem, on which he was engaged.

The next morning, his teacher, Dr. Lewis, observing him at breakfast with such an expression of extreme suffering in his face that he was scarcely to be recognised, questioned him anxiously, and obtained from him the avowal that he had passed the whole night in cruel tortures,

but that profiting by his inability to sleep, he had, nevertheless, continued to study his problem, and had solved it.

Doctor Lewis, to whom the education of Robert Emmet was confided, was an intelligent Protestant clergyman, of broad and liberal mind. He took great pleasure in cultivating the varied talents of his pupil's fertile mind, and was, it said, the first to inspire him with a hatred for intolerance and religious oppression. After having successfully studied at the school of Mr. Samuel White, in Camden Street, which, at that time, was celebrated particularly for the study of Mathematics, and attended the Lectures at Trinity College, Robert Emmet, in 1796, entered into the school of St. Columba (4). St. Columba is situated at some distance from Dublin, on a hill overlooking the sea, and within view of the mountains, and of that bay, which the Irish, in their patriotic pride, compare with the Bay of Naples. He continued his studies with great success, and obtained every year prizes in the different branches of science and literature. The ruins of a circular-shaped temple are still shown at St. Columba. They rise above a base of rocks, always steeped in dark and sombre shadows, save when the setting sun gilds them with the evanescent glories of the evening. There, it is said, seated on a broken column, under the shelter of a beech tree, Robert Emmet already gave way to ardent and melancholy musings on the sufferings and wrongs of his country.

(4) [The authoress has here fallen into a mistake. There was no such College or School in existence in Emmet's time. He became a student of Trinity College, which he entered in 1793, at the early age of fifteen; and he continued an Undergraduate of Dublin University, distinguishing himself throughout his course there, until arbitrarily expelled, in the spring of 1798, on account of his political principles.—ED.]

While his studious boyhood was thus passing away in the calm seclusion of St. Columba, the tempest was brewing outside ; and at last the long-suppressed and unendurable troubles of Ireland burst forth in a storm of fierce insurrection.

The Rebellion of 1798 spread far over the country, and was very near being successful. It does not belong to our purpose to narrate the events of these remarkable years : a few preliminary observations are, however, indispensable ; and to elucidate the immediate subject in hand, it is important to make the reader familiar with an outline of events unknown, or rather forgotten, in our own times.

It has been so often said that it is almost useless to repeat it, that the dominion of England in Ireland has been, during centuries, a long act of tyranny, the more odious because it borrowed the forms of Liberty. On one side, the Catholic population reduced to a state of slavery, and subjected to a code of Draconian laws which not only deprived them of all the franchises of citizens, but even denied them the first rights of man ; and on the other hand, a false pretence of representative government, the empty show of which passed, in the mind even of the least and most intelligent of the Protestants, for a reality. Such was, at the time Emmet lived, the social and political state of this unhappy country (5). The Protestant Parliament of Catholic Ireland held its sittings like a garrison in a conquered

(5) It will suffice to give a few examples to enable the reader to judge of the laws which then oppressed the Irish people. Not only were the Catholics excluded from all offices, civil and political, but they were forbidden to carry arms for personal defence, and he who attacked and plundered a Catholic [carrying arms] on the highway was not liable to any punishment. By virtue of the law, whoever laid information against a Catholic immediately got

country. Composed of a House of Lords, hereditary by law, and a House of Commons, the great majority of whose members were the nominees and minions of the aristocracy and the Minister, Parliament,—whose duration was not fixed by law, and, therefore, existed at the caprice of Government—was, in fact, nothing more than an assembly of perpetual dictators, governing in the name of a foreign power. Empowered to oppress the people which it was supposed to represent, it was on the least appearance of opposition subjected to the most violent measures, and made to feel by the English Government its state of utter degradation and dependence if at any time it sought to exercise freedom. Its votes were purchased by a continual system of corruption. The Parliament, the administration, justice itself,—everything was venal in Ireland; so that, in reality, the

possession of his fortune. Catholic parents were forbidden to educate their own children; the son, by abjuring his father's faith, immediately acquired his father's fortune. Catholics were forbidden to purchase or inherit lands, &c., &c. According to a solemn declaration of the Lord Chancellor, in 1769, the very existence of a great majority of the people was not recognised by law, and depended only on the caprice of the government. See, respecting the English Administration in Ireland, M. Gustave de Beaumont: *De l'Irlande Sociale, Politique et Religieuse*;—also *the Life of Curran, by his Son*.

By the admission of the English themselves of the present day, the policy of England towards Ireland in times past must be condemned. See *Harwood's Irish Rebellion; Past and Present Policy of England towards Ireland, by Greville*.

"The moment the very name of Ireland is mentioned," says Sydney Smith, "the English seem to bid adieu to common feeling, common prudence, and to common sense, and to act with the barbarity of tyrants and the fatuity of idiots."—*Peter Plymley's Letters*, ii.

Irish Protestant had scarcely more liberty than the Catholic. Subject, like the former, to a foreign power, from which he neither hoped for justice nor pity, he could only purchase the favour of his masters by sacrificing the interests of his country. At once, by a double necessity, slave and tyrant, he disgraced himself, and became, in their hands, the instrument of the oppression of the Catholics. This system of tyranny, without equal in the world, was crowned by a Viceroy, who, never a native of Ireland, came there only to rule—as ignorant about the country he had to govern as he was unknown in it. The place he held was a sinecure which the English Government disposed of for political purposes, and which often served to repair the broken fortunes of some ruined nobleman.

It is not easy to conceive that such a narrow distance as the Irish Sea could separate a free country from an enslaved one. The grandeur of the Government of England, and the wise equity of her laws, made the hypocritical severity of her conduct the more conspicuous. A citizen of England, who would never have permitted a constable to enter his house without a warrant drawn up in conformity with the law, could not treat the inhabitants of a neighbouring country even as well as he treated the natives of his possessions in India or those of the Ionian Islands.

The necessity for colouring arbitrary power with a certain legal decorum rendered it even more hateful. The constant iniquity of this policy was, during centuries, one of those strange anomalies so frequent in that country which is the most fertile of all in contrast and inconsistencies.

Owing to her admirable constitution, the result of time, chance, and the wisdom of man, England has had, at all times, the privilege of fixing the attention of the world. The object, by turns, of passionate admiration and of blind

hatred, this great, fortunate, and singular nation may, with some appearance of truth, furnish topics for champions of the most opposite sentiments. In fact, the English have been remarked for devoting themselves, with disinterested ardour, to many a noble cause—the abolition of the slave trade for instance—and yet, the accusations which their egotistical policy has given rise to abroad are by no means unfounded. There is, however, even in the violence of their passion a serious conviction which commands respect without inspiring confidence. More haughty than proud, more blunt than sincere, more honest than high-minded, more just than generous, their superb faith in the privileged grandeur of their race, is at once their strength, their vice, and their excuse. In nations, even more than in individuals, good and evil flow from the same source.

Superior to their neighbours in talent, grace, and ardour, by a certain heroic vivacity, the Irish were, for a long time, as much calumniated as they were oppressed. The character of the vanquished has scarcely ever been delineated except by the conqueror. It is easy to be severe on a conquered people; and Madame de Stael has said, somewhere, “Nations deserve their fate, whatever it be.” This sentence may seem rigorous, and does not appear quite just, for success often accompanies vice, while failure is as often the reward of virtue. The unconquerable perseverance of the English, the determination of arriving at their ends by every means possible, may by some be considered as a great quality, but it ought not to be considered as a great virtue. The generous and amiable disposition of the Irish people is surely not a vice, and yet it greatly injured them in the struggle they had to sustain against a policy at once cruel and perfidious. It must, however, be said, to their honour, that the Irish people never accepted

their humiliating degradation ; and their history forms but a series of efforts continually renewed, though always powerless, to shake off the yoke of oppression.

The long struggle of Ireland against England was, in fact, whatever may have been thought of it, rather a war of nationality than a war of religion. Religion was used as a veil to hide political passions, and became, on one side, the standard of revolt, and on the other the standard of persecution. But in 1798, if the army of the rebellion was Catholic, the greater number of the leaders were Protestants. (6) In the North a great many heroic Protestants were to be found, even in the ranks of the people. Strange to say, at the outset the Catholics were not the most ardent in the struggle for independence. It seemed as if their spirit, broken by servitude, rejected the hope of a better fortune. For this reason it is not to be wondered at that the spirit of hostility between the two nations long outlived the emancipation of the Catholics. Even now, if you meet in the fertile plains of Ireland a young rosy-cheeked peasant, with locks golden like the sunshine, he will tell you, with an air of pride and resolution, "My father was a rebel." Such is his title of nobility ; and yet, through prudence, through respect for the well-considered interests of their country, the historians of the rebellion preface their narrative works with a certain declaration of "loyalty" towards England. They dare not, in reviewing the recollection of these recent struggles, say all they think ; it seems as if they were stepping on embers still glowing—on lava which had not yet grown solid beneath their tread.

The happy revolution in America at the end of the last

(6) Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and the Emmets, for example.

century brought across the Atlantic a terrible lesson to Governments as well as to nations. It was when liberty first awoke on the other side of the Channel that minds in Ireland became agitated, imaginations inflamed—and that a sentiment of right and of justice began to exist in the people. France, with that disinterested love for justice and humanity which is the eternal honour of the Revolution of 1789, appeared then to the oppressed as the liberating angel of the world. A certain sympathy has always existed between Ireland and France, which burst forth more clearly at the dawn of the French Revolution. Public spirit was seen, in fact, to awaken in both countries at the same time. In Dublin, and in the towns bordering on the sea, a body of Militia, armed for the defence of the coast during the war, had ten years before transformed themselves into a vast association, which took the name of Volunteers, to demand the liberty of their country from the foreign oppressor, not as slaves supplicating their masters, but as men determined to obtain it at the point of the sword, to bring all classes of society under the standard of a nationality which no tyranny could put down. And such was afterwards the object of the Society of United Irishmen. (7) Faithful to the well-known maxim, "*Divide et impera*," England excited different factious and religious animosities to establish more permanently her dominion. Animated by the generous spirit of the French Revolution, the United Irish-

(7) The Society of United Irishmen was founded in 1791 by Russell, Tone [and others]; it was composed of committees of baronies, counties, provinces, and, lastly, of a superior committee, which was called the National Committee. The members were engaged by oath to secrecy, as well as to propagate their principles by every means in their power.

men took for their motto—"Mutual tolerance and oblivion, in the common interest, of all religious divisions." (8)

When it commenced, in 1791, the United Irish Society indeed only claimed Parliamentary Reform, a real and complete national representation, and the emancipation of the Catholics. The leaders aimed at no more, and carried no further their wishes or even their hopes ; and yet they considered that all the miseries of Ireland came from English domination, and that delivered from this yoke the country would resume the natural course of her prosperity. Religious oppression was, according to them, the least of her grievances. Her commerce, her manufactures, all the natural sources of her wealth, were dried up by a restless and jealous tyranny. Sometimes, it is true, they went so far as to meditate the definitive separation of Ireland from England ; in occasional movements of exasperation this supreme remedy appeared to them the sole deliverance from her woes. It was, however, only in 1798 when the Insurrection broke out in spite of them, and when, as always

(8) It was at this time that a congregation, composed half of Catholics and half of Presbyterians, might be seen listening attentively to the same sermon. A man who was executed at Carrickfergus walked to the scaffold, accompanied on one side by a Catholic priest and on the other by a Presbyterian Minister. Those who may desire to know the plans and hopes of the United Irishmen ought to read the examination of Thomas Addis Emmet and William James MacNevin, before the Secret Committee of Parliament (See Madden's *United Irishmen*. MacNevin and T. A. Emmet, *Pieces of Irish History*). In the Memoirs of Lord Holland (*Memoirs of the Whig Party*) may be found a very impartial view (remarkable in an Englishman) of the policy of the United Irishmen, the justice of their cause, and their chances of success. On the internal organisation of the United Irish Society, see Madden, vol. ii., app.

happens, it got beyond the control of its leaders, that they embarked their fortune, and that of their country, in the perilous adventure. In a short time, the Association extended over the whole country; the most eminent men in Ireland directed it by their counsels, and it had in its ranks men of intellect, of high standing, and of name. Popular feeling was entirely in favour of the rebellion. How burning must have been their thirst for liberty, as yet unknown to them, and painted to their imagination in the most glowing colours,—a dangerous passion to the minds of a people as inexperienced as they were ardent!—for it must be said, for the abiding ill-fortune of oppressed nations, that it is only in a country of freemen that the apprenticeship to freedom can be served. I cannot describe the flame of hercism, says Lord Cloncurry, in his memoirs, which was then kindled in all classes of society;—at the bar, in the pulpit, in the nobleman's saloon, as in the peasant's hut, the same electric spark made souls thrill with a common impulse, and animated even the hearts of women and children with the courage of men. The attachment of the Irish people to their aristocracy—a distinguishing feature of the national character—made the union of all classes for a common object closer. In spite of the respect which is due to accomplished facts, we may affirm that if ever cause was just, and deserved to succeed, it was that of the Irish rebellion: if ever passions were generous and sincere, those which animated the Fitzgeralds, the Emmets, and the O'Connors were so. What were the grievances of the revolted States of America,—what were the wrongs of England, under James II.,—compared with those of Ireland? If we do not admit of a morality with two faces, indulgent to the victors and severe towards the vanquished, we must agree that never was a

people more oppressed, and consequently never was rebellion more legitimate. "If we marvel," says, with great truth, Monsieur Duvergier d'Hauranne, "it is that a nation of several millions of men should have borne such a yoke so long." (9)

Examples are not scarce in history—showing a weak nation throwing off the yoke of a more powerful one. Without money, and without an army, the Swiss, in the middle ages, drove the Austrians from their mountains. Subjugated for a moment by Spain, the Portuguese in the sixteenth century recovered their independence. In our own days, we have seen Greece free herself from the yoke of Turkey, and Belgium separate herself from Holland. In 1798, England, humbled by her failure in the American war, at war with France, troubled and alarmed—as the oppressor ever is—at the movements in Ireland, was not the England we look upon to-day. We should distrust that too natural tendency to reason on events after they have happened, and to decide that what has not taken place necessarily could not take place. Perhaps self-esteem feels itself more at ease on the side of the conqueror, and our judgment does not dread being compromised in demonstrating, with no great effort of sagacity, that what has succeeded was to succeed, and that what has failed was to fail. The dazzling effect of triumph alters truth, even in the past, and far better was the time when men boasted of despising fortune, and when the conquered felt prouder in their defeat than their conquerors in success.

The Irish, it is true, did not resemble those proud sons of the Puritans, the children of revolt, inheriting the

(9) *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1840.

instincts of independence, who, for the first time, on the shores of the new world, caused the fortunes of England to waver. There unfortunately existed among the inhabitants of Ireland a conflict of opposite tendencies, which would have rendered it difficult to find a form of government capable of uniting them. Hatred of tyranny and the instinct of rebellion were in them alloyed with a love for the pomp and splendour of monarchy. Perhaps we might find in France traces of similar contradictions. "They are bad as subjects (said the English), and still worse as rebels." If the insurrection had triumphed it was by some assumed that the Catholic population, degraded by ages of persecution, and studiously kept ignorant, would turn against its leaders, and that the war begun in the name of liberty would have become a sort of "jacquerie" or servile war, in which the generous chiefs of the rebellion would be sacrificed as its first victims. Mistakes are, however, made in assuming evil, as well as in assuming good, and humanity is not always as bad as it is represented. In 1848, when the slaves were suddenly emancipated in the French colonies, who would not have prophesied disorder and violence? And yet, what was the result of that measure? Justice and liberty triumphed without troubles or bloodshed.

However all this may be, the result attaches weight, it must be acknowledged, to the opinions of the moderate patriots of Ireland, and those who, like Grattan, Curran, Ponsonby, Barrington, &c., thought that their country, being connected with a great free government, ought to claim its rights without pretending to separation. These men devoted themselves, with talent and courage, to an ungracious task—they endeavoured to make some truth penetrate into the lying forms of a vain and false constitution

Notwithstanding the fruitlessness of their efforts, they counted still upon the power of liberty for compelling the oppressor, sooner or later, to do justice to the oppressed. During their lifetime they were not destined to see the dawn of better days of Ireland. More fortunate than his predecessors, O'Connell, employing against England arguments which evoked in turn sentiments of remorse, and pity, and of fear, subsequently gave to the same policy an *eclat* and a grandeur that fixed the attention of Europe. Those to whom the future has shown at the winning side are entitled to say that they have been the wisest; and yet even common sense ought not to condemn the Irish patriots who, encouraged by the good fortune of the rebels at the other side of the Atlantic, anticipated and desired a different issue. We forget too easily that the contemporaries of the contest were not in possession of the secret of the future. In truth, nothing was more doubtful; and this secret, which historians possess, makes them unfairly despise the hopes and passions of their predecessors, to whom it was not imparted. "In history, as in war, woe to the vanquished!" says the eloquent M. de Lamartine; "contemporaries are not the only flatterers of successful crime—the future is also a flatterer. There is in humanity at large a certain dastardly and perverse tendency to approve of what has force to support it, and to condemn, without scruple or examination, what has failed." (10) It is, in fact, one of the worst influences of successful tyranny to teach lies to nations, and to wrest truth to selfish purposes.

Among those to whom the sufferings of oppression were the most bitter, and who, living in an enslaved country, could not accept repose at the expense of honour, must be counted in the

(10) M. de Lamartine, *Vie de César*.

first rank the elder brother of our hero. Thomas Addis Emmet was one of the principal actors of the Rebellion of 1798. He entered into the Association of the United Irishmen in 1796, and directed it by the wisdom of his counsel still more than by any active part which he took in the Insurrection. Naturally proud, reserved, and silent, though ardent, with a broad intelligence and a kind heart, but governed by inflexible principle—and ready to make every sacrifice for the cause—Thomas Addis Emmet had several of the qualities necessary for the chief of a party. Lord Edward Fitzgerald (the Irish used to say) was the most amiable, noble-minded, and the best of men, but he was not the man to conduct a revolution to a successful issue ; the man we wanted was Thomas Addis Emmet. (11) He became, in 1798, with Lord E. Fitzgerald, Lord Cloncurry, and Arthur O'Connor, one of the members of the Executive Directory, proclaimed in the town of Wexford during one of the short triumphs of the insurrection. In concert with General Russell and Theobald Wolfe Tone, he took the resolution of asking assistance from the Directory of the French Republic in the struggle Ireland was maintaining against England. (12)

(11) Thomas Addis Emmet. Madden's *United Irishmen*:—"Of the United Irishmen (says Lord Holland, in his *Memoirs*), "the man of greatest ability and capacity was Thomas Addis Emmet."

(12) Thomas Moore remarks, with reason, in his *Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald*, that persons inclined to blame the United Irishmen for having, in their weakness, demanded aid from France, ought to remember that the authors of the Revolution of 1688 considered themselves at liberty to invite over the army of the Prince of Orange, not in order to deliver them from the yoke of a foreign power, but to overthrow the government of their own country. It was the opinion of the Emperor Napoleon that the

Theobald Wolfe Tone started for France, commissioned to treat of the affairs of Ireland in person with General Hoche. It is said that their last meeting took place in a small field, of a triangular shape, situated on a hill near Rathfarnham. It was the country residence of Thomas Addis Emmet. In separating from his companions, Emmet remarked that the field was exactly similar to that in which William Tell and the Swiss conspirators had sworn the defeat of the Austrians and the deliverance of their country.

But these days of hope were of short duration. The disaster of the French fleet and expedition, in 1798, accomplished the defeat of the insurrection. England, blinded by passion, precipitated herself with ungovernable fury on Ireland. Blood flowed in torrents. What noble lives were then sacrificed to the justest cause in the world ! The frightful suppression of rebellion in Ireland, 1798, was "The Reign of Terror" of England. This is what the Irish say in their bitter resentment,—though there is, perhaps, a little exaggeration in the comparison ; all the atrocities committed by the Orangemen, courts-martial, murder, torture, executions without judgment, though not only tolerated but encouraged by the English Government, could not have been as directly the work of Lord Camden and Lord Castlereagh as the crimes during the Reign of Terror were those of "The Mountain" and of the Committee of Public Safety in Paris. "However," says a priest, who, by singular fortune, was present successively in

expedition of General Humbert, in 1798, had every chance of success ; and that, but for circumstances purely accidental and impossible to foresee, it would infallibly have assured the deliverance of Ireland.

France in 1793, and in Ireland in 1798, and had the sad privilege of being able to compare the two Reigns of Terror, "I saw human life treated with as much contempt in Ireland as in France, but in France I never saw wretched creatures expiring in the pangs of torture." (13) Torture was, in fact, a singular aggravation of "*La loi des suspects*." (14) It is useless to insist further on this affinity between the two countries, which does very little honour to humanity, to modern civilisation, and to the two greatest nations in Europe. Providence, in its mysterious designs, may, when it pleases, draw good from evil, but the instruments

(13) In reality, the English Government was the aggressor, and the Reign of Terror had been inaugurated by Lord Camden, for the purpose of breaking up the Society of the United Irishmen, before the explosion of the Insurrection. After the Rebellion had been put down, populations that were peaceful, and not at all disposed to revolt, were subjected to the rule of Courts-martial; and this rule of Courts-martial was made up of massacres, tortures, and executions without trial. In those localities, where the cruelties of the rebels preceded those of the English army, it is certain that they did not equal them in atrocity. It is generally agreed that the Irish race is of a more gentle disposition than the English race. It is a remarkable fact that the same accidents of history are sometimes found among peoples of the same origin. Slavery may be said to be to-day for the freest country of the world, America, what Ireland was for England. Would you know how the English dealt with the rebels who fell into their hands? Read the account of the treatment inflicted upon their slaves by the Americans of the Southern States. Never was there a more striking resemblance.

(14) Under this law, which was part of the code of the Reign of Terror in France, and may be termed the "Law of Suspicion," arrests were made at the caprice of Government, on pretexts as frivolous as that of "being suspected of deserving suspicion."

of evil ought not, on that account, to be the less condemned. If the ancient *regime* was at an end, if the consequences of the Revolution were fortunate for France, it is, most certainly, no reason for absolving the Reign of Terror. Lord Castlereagh's administration must not, I think, obtain that absolution which is so easily accorded to success. That cruel policy had not even the merit of being skilful; it was as stupid as it was ferocious. If time has brought Ireland if not happiness, at least peace, it must be attributed to circumstances which no one at that epoch could foresee. (15) It is, moreover, well worthy of being remarked, as a natural characteristic, that the English have never endeavoured to excuse their conduct in Ireland. They say very little about it, and when they speak they do so with great reserve—indeed, on their Irish policy silence is wisdom. By an instinct dictated as much by policy as by any generous sentiment of honour, they cast a veil over the faults of their country. Perhaps their example might be followed with advantage in France, where the love of theories gave rise, according to the different epochs or parties, to a justification of the Reign of Terror, and to apologies for the massacre of St. Bartholomew.

The tragic deaths of the chiefs of the Irish Rebellion are well known. Lord Edward Fitzgerald died in prison, with an accusation pending against him which entailed

(15) One of these circumstances has been depopulation by means of one those great emigrations which have among the Irish received the name of *Exodus*, the native race taking the part of giving place to the victors. "Providence," says M. de Lavergne, in his remarkable work upon Agriculture in England, "has produced peace in Ireland by solitude."

capital punishment. Theobald Wolfe Tone died condemned to the scaffold. Treated with more indulgence than the others, Arthur O'Connor, MacNevin, and Thomas Addis Emmet, were to be transported, and were detained prisoners for four years at Fort St. George. The wife of Thomas Addis Emmet came to join him, and lived during these four years in his cell, giving him proofs of devotedness equal to those of Madame Lafayette in the prison of Olmutz.

II.

YOUNG ROBERT, while his brother was expiating in prison his pretended State crime, had just crowned his studies by the most brilliant success, particularly in mathematics and in natural science. An ardent desire for acquiring instruction, the ambition to conquer difficulties, did not exclusively occupy that keen intellect. Robert, early in life, was a disciple of his brother's; he adopted those Republican and Democratic principles, which the chief leaders of the United Irishmen professed. The stormy times in which it was his fate to live had been reflected on his pure and energetic spirit. Love of country, was in his ardent and impetuous mind the all-absorbing sentiment. It would seem as if, by a wise precaution of Providence, the most ill-fated countries such as Ireland and Poland have inspired their children with the deepest attachment. Robert Emmet, no doubt, said to himself:—

“Que plus la mere est malheureuse,
Plus les enfants doivent l'aimer.” (16)

Brought up in the midst of the horrors of the Rebellion

(16) Verses which De Bufflers long ago addressed to Poland. And Thomas Moore, in one of his songs addressed to Ireland, says:

“Thy chains as they rankle, thy blood as it runs,
But make thee more painfully dear to thy sons,
Whose hearts, like the young of the desert bird's nest,
Drink love in each blood-drop that falls from thy breast.”

—*Irish Melodies.*

of 1798, Robert became inspired with hatred for the English yoke ; upon that subject he felt before he could reason ; and, to say the truth, never was hatred more justifiable.

The sentiments which moved him are depicted in some verses written at that time ; and not deficient in lyric effect. These stanzas are entitled *Arbour Hill* ;—(Arbour Hill is an elevation near Dublin, on which criminals, condemned for high treason, were executed and interred) :—

No rising column marks this spot,
Where many a victim lies,
But, oh ! the blood which here has streamed,
To Heaven for justice cries !

It claims it, on the oppressor's head,
Who joys in human woe,
Who drinks the tears by misery shed,
And mocks them as they flow.

* * * * *

Oh, sacred justice ! free this land
From tyranny abhorred ;
Resume thy balance and thy seat,
Resume—but sheathe thy sword.

Unconsecrated is this ground—
Unblessed by holy hands ;
No bell here tolls its solemn sound,
No monument here stands.

But here the patriot's tears are shed,
The poor man's blessing given ;
These consecrate the virtuous dead—
These waft their fame to heaven. (17)

(17) The translator gives the author's admirable translation of the original :—

Aucune colonne ne s'élève sur cette place où pèrit plus d'une

In the beginning of the year 1798 Robert Emmet was received a member of the Historical Society of Dublin. This celebrated Society was founded in 1770, in order to exercise the young students of the University in elocution. It was the school in which the greatest orators of Ireland were formed, and the theatre on which, for the first time, the talents of Curran, Grattan, Plunket, Temple Emmet, &c., were brought to light. Questions on morals, history, and politics were discussed, of which the following are examples :—"Is the conquest of a barbarous nation by a civilised one justifiable in a moral point of view?" "Was Charles the First condemned justly, or must his death be considered as a crime?" &c. The President announced the subject; each of the members spoke and answered in his turn. It was forbidden to touch on any subject relating to the politics of the day; but, with the feverish excitement which reigned in every mind, the most distant allusion to the situation of Ireland found an echo in an audience readily swayed by the same passion which inspired the orator. Emmet's *debut* was most successful. He gave proofs from that day of possessing oratorical talents of the first order. The meeting had assembled for *his reception*, and the question proposed was :—"Is full liberty of discussion essential for the existence of a good government?" The President informed the members that any allusion to the politics of the present time was forbidden. Robert Emmet, in his maiden speech, restrained himself with consummate skill, within the bounds prescribed. He, of course, supported the Liberal side of the question, and spoke eloquently of the ancient Republics of Greece and Rome, concluding by a most vivid picture of the evils to which a government deprived of the salutary control of the press and the tribune exposes a country. One of

the students, named Lefroy (18), made an effort to reply, and endeavoured to refute, one after another, all his arguments. Emmet replied immediately in a speech which was evidently extempore, in which he displayed the most remarkable talent, according to Doctor Macartney, who was present at the meeting. "If ever," said he, in concluding his speech, "a government should be criminal enough to restrain the liberty of discussion, it would rest with the people to deliberate on the errors of their leaders, to examine with attention the evils inflicted on them, and the remedy they could apply to them, and that being done, their duty would be to draw from such an examination "*practical conclusions.*"

Eloquence was a natural gift in the family of the Emmets. Robert's reminded the audience of that of his brother,

noble victime. Mais le sang qui a coulé ici par torrents crie vengeance au ciel, sur la tête de l'oppresseur qui se joue de la douleur humaine et se moque des larmes qu'il fait couler..... Voyez-vous ces plaines désolées, arrosées du sang de ses enfants; voyez-vous les flammes qui s'élèvent de ces hameaux embrasés; entendez-vous ces cris d'horreur? Ici une victime expire dans les agonies de la torture..... O sainte justice, délivre ce pays d'une tyrannie abhorrée. Reprends ta balance et ton siège; reprends ton épée, mais remets-la promptement dans le fourreau. Que la liberté se lève suivie de la miséricorde, que son triomphe ne soit pas souillé de sang, et que les cendres des tyrans ne se mêlent pas à celles de nos martyrs..... Et vous qui reposez ici, que votre nom soit sacré. Cette terre n'a pas été bénie par de saintes prières. Le son solennel des cloches ne retentit pas dans les airs. Aucun monument ne s'élève sur cette place. Mais c'est ici que coulent les larmes des patriotes, c'est ici que l'entend les bénédictions du pauvre, et qu'elles s'élèvent jusqu'au ciel la renommée de votre mort et de vos vertus.....

(18) The present Lord Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench.

Temple Emmet. Noble, graceful, impetuous, and bold, his elegance of diction, the harmonious sound of his voice, the modesty and gravity of his bearing, charmed all who listened to him. "This eloquence was truly surprising," says Grattan, who cannot be suspected of partiality towards Robert Emmet ; and Mr. Burrowes (a good judge) used to say that he was, in this respect, superior to any man he had heard in any country. He displayed a power and an incomparable elevation of oratory, successful alike in matter and in form. (19) It was in the facility with which he treated the most abstract subjects—in the outbursts of passion and flash of imagination—that chiefly consisted the originality of a talent to as it may be seen, the best judges have rendered homage. Robert Emmet's eloquence was the eloquence of action ; it carried away the audience. Bold, picturesque, and surprising imagery crowded on his mind, and animated his reasoning. Of this talent, so much praised, his spirited and touching defence at his trial is all that remains. There, in the last accents of the youthful orator, vibrates that voice of power and passion which belongs to the great masters of eloquence—there flows that wide stream—

"Di parlar si largo fiume,"

in which the soul is reflected as light glasses itself in a limpid crystal. It is in the tribune that individuality reveals itself in its grace and its freedom, and not without reason have the ancients considered oratory as the first of

(19) *Grattan's Life and Times*. "I have conversed," says Madden, with many persons who had heard him [Robert] speak in these societies, some of them of very decided Tory politics, and I never heard but one opinion expressed, of the transcendant oratorical powers he displayed there." (*United Irishmen*, 3d series, vol. 3, p. 5.)

the arts. It is, indeed, one of those arts whose noble destination rises above the worship of mere beauty, through which it radiates, as it were, and can assume it as a brilliant robe; but its real grandeur is in action, in the power of truth over men assembled together. The qualities which it requires in the orator are complex, and are not derived from talent alone. One cannot avoid a feeling of sadness in surveying the frail monuments of oratory such as we feel in contemplating those grand frescoes of the Italian school, whose colours and lines are fading and indistinct, and which seem ready to fall from the crumbling walls. Under the cold and colourless words the breath of life still palpitates, and those admirable creations of a day, destined to live and die in its short span, glow with transient splendour before vanishing in the shadows of the past.

Robert was still very young, and already great things were expected from him. He exercised a singular ascendancy over the generation in which he lived, and which regarded him as its chief. His precocious talents, the strong and tender qualities which his character revealed, even from his childhood, inspired all those who surrounded him with a mixture of admiration and respect. "He was," says Phillips, (20) "a young man of a truly wonderful genius." Robert Emmet had himself, perhaps, faith in the great promise which his brilliant youth gave. It does not appear, however, that all the passions which show themselves in the morning of life, ambition, or love of glory, ever vividly occupied his mind. Naturally ardent and melancholy, he lived in the society of the poets and writers of antiquity. The great minds and the illustrious

(20) Phillips; *Recollections of Curran*.

dead of other ages were the invisible witnesses of his life. Indifferent to the world around him, nothing had yet troubled this noble and generous heart, which was so soon to cease beating.

“The first days of Spring,” says Vauvenargues, “are less lovely than the dawning virtue of a young man.” Such is the description which his contemporaries have given of Robert Emmet in early youth, already uniting with the graces of adolescence the serious qualities of mature age. He was above the middle stature, rather slight and delicate, although endowed with nervous strength which enabled him easily to support great fatigue. He walked with a quick step, and all his movements were rapid. The portraits remaining of him have been made from memory after his death, and the painter, it is said, pre-occupied with his tragic fate, has given him a sad and sombre expression which he had not in the happy days of life. (21) His countenance was pleasing and distingué. His hair was brown, and his complexion quite pale; the eyebrow was arched, and the eyes black and large, with dark long eyelashes, which gave to his looks a remarkable expression of pride, penetration, and mildness. His nose was aquiline, and his mouth was slightly disdainful. Energy, delicacy, and tenderness are expressed in his melancholy and ardent features. Such was, however, his total absence of affectation, and his simplicity, that nothing seems to have at first sight attracted attention in Robert Emmet. The

(21) It is difficult to obtain a precise idea of Robert Emmet's countenance from his portraits, which differ from each other; his masque, taken immediately after his death, does not resemble his portraits: the features are regular, the countenance without expression, like that of a head congealed by death.

modesty of his character, joined to a sort of habitual reserve, hid the workings of his mind in the ordinary circumstances of life, but, were any subject started which was deeply interesting to him, he appeared quite another man. Were I, says Thomas Moore, to number the men, among all I have ever known, who appeared to me to combine, in the greatest degree, pure moral worth with intellectual power, I should amongst the highest of the few place Robert Emmet. Wholly free from the follies and frailties of youth—though how capable he was of the most devoted passion events afterwards proved—the pursuit of science, in which he eminently distinguished himself, seemed at this time the only object that at all divided his thoughts with that enthusiasm for Irish freedom which in him was an hereditary, as well as a national, feeling—himself being the second martyr his father had given to the cause. Simple in his habits, and with a repose of look and manner indicating but little movement within, it was only when the spring was touched that set his feelings—and, through them, his intellect—in motion, that he at all rose above the level of ordinary men. On no occasion was this more peculiarly striking than in those displays of oratory with which, both in the Debating and the Historical Society, he so often enchained the attention and sympathy of his young audience. No two individuals, indeed, could be much more unlike to each other than was the same youth to himself before rising to speak and after. The brow that had appeared inanimate and almost drooping at once elevating itself, in all the consciousness of power, and the whole countenance and figure of the speaker assuming a change as of one suddenly inspired. Of his oratory, it must be recollected I speak from youthful recollections; but I have heard little since that appeared to me of a

loftier or (what is a far more rare quality in Irish eloquence) a purer quality. (22)

The author of a remarkable article, entitled "Robert Emmet and his Contemporaries," (23) speaks of our hero in nearly the same terms. "He had the external qualifications necessary for a great orator, that power of imagination which excites or calms down at will the passions of his audience, the activity and authority necessary for the leader of a party. A Protestant himself, he most ardently

(22) Such in soul and intelligence was one of those men sacrificed to the evils of the time, and gifted with talents which would be the ornament and support of a well-regulated society. A system of Government, which could reduce such men as Robert and Lord Edward Fitzgerald to live the life of conspirators, and die the death of traitors, is condemned by that alone, without needing that we seek further information; and it would be difficult even to speak of it to-day with calmness, did we not hope from the present state of the world that such a tyranny can never rise again. —*Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald.*

(23) *London and Dublin Magazine*, 1825. This article has been recently published, in a collection entitled:—*Rebellion Book and Black History*; a collection of all the documents relating to the Rebellion, with these verses for motto:—

Rebellion! foul, dishonouring word,
Whose wrongful blight so oft has stained
The holiest cause that tongue or sword
Of mortal ever lost or gained.
How many a spirit born to bless,
Has sunk beneath that withering name,
Whom but a day's, an hour's, success
Had wafted to eternal fame."—*Thomas Moore.*

The author of this article is believed to have been Judge Johnson, a writer of considerable reputation in Ireland.

embraced the cause of the emancipation of the Catholics when that cause could number but few advocates in Ireland."

It was in the debates of the Historical Society that Robert Emmet became acquainted with Thomas Moore, over whom he exercised a great influence ; and the two young men became most intimate. A taste for literature, and, above all, the same love for Ireland, united them, in spite of great differences of character. For a time, Moore adopted the opinions, and partook the hopes, of his friend. It is rather curious to hear him, when advanced in age, disenchanted of the illusions of youth, half repentant of his past errors, and not quite sure whether he is right or wrong in repenting, relating to us the beginning of his acquaintance with Robert Emmet. The political agitation, he observes, which reigned outside, penetrated into the interior of our university, and a young man, destined to play a part ever to be memorable in the troubles of Ireland, attracted, at that time, general attention, as well among the students, as among men in power outside the University, by the splendour of his eloquence in the debates of the Historical Society. Robert Emmet was most conspicuous among us ; he was, perhaps, a little older than I was (I do not exactly remember)—but he appeared to be much my senior ; and in any case there was then between our situations such a difference, that when I became a Member of the Society I found him already distinguished, soaring above those who surrounded him, not only by his learning and his eloquence, but by the irreproachable purity of his life, and the mild gravity of his manners. And as to the Society itself, Moore continues :—Of the political tone of our Debating Society, which was held at the rooms of different resident members, a notion may be formed from the nature of the ques-

tions proposed for discussion, one of which was, I recollect, "Whether an aristocracy or democracy was most favourable to the advancement of science and literature?" while another still more critically bearing upon the awful position of parties at this crisis was most significantly put: "Whether a soldier was bound on all occasions to obey the orders of his commanding officer?" On the former of these questions the power of Emmet's eloquence was wonderful, and I feel at this moment as if his language was still sounding in my ears. The prohibition against touching upon modern politics, which it was found afterwards necessary to enforce, had not yet been introduced; and Emmet, who took, of course, ardently the side of democracy in the debate, after a brief review of the great Republics of antiquity, showing how much they had all done for the advancement of literature and arts, hastened, lastly, to the grand and perilous example of the young Republic of France; and, referring to the story of Cæsar carrying with him across the river only his sword and his Commentaries, he said—"Thus France, at this time, swims through a sea of blood; but, while on one hand she wields the sword against her aggressors, with the other she upholds the interests of the arts and of literature uncontaminated by the bloody tide through which she struggles." Passing then to the second part of the other question, as to the obligation of a soldier to obey, on all occasions, his commanding officer, Emmet, after refuting this notion, as degrading to human nature, imagined the case of a soldier who, having thus blindly fought in the ranks of the oppressor, had fallen in the combat, and then most powerfully described him rushing into the presence of his Creator, and exclaiming, in an agony of remorse, while he holds

forth his sword, reeking still with the blood of the oppressed and innocent—"Oh, God! I know not what I did!"

We take a pleasure in fancying we see Emmet, with his proud and determined looks, surrounded by those ardent young men, who, devouring every word that fell from his lips, already saw in the intrepid orator the future liberator of Ireland. They all felt that enthusiasm which the French Revolution, up to this time a source of hope and courage, had inspired in the mind of every generous man. He was deeply convinced that the good cause always triumphs in the end, that tyranny and vice contain in themselves the principle of destruction. If the idea is a false one, and the illusion dangerous, it may, in truth, be excused on account of the extreme youth of the orator. Grattan would not have agreed with him on the subject of France. "Do not touch," he used to say, "that tree of the French Revolution; it gives death, and is not the tree of science."

Robert Emmet, continues Moore, was the chief ornament of the popular party of our Society, and, to form an idea of the excitement which then reigned, we must not only have lived in these stormy times, but have shared, as I did, all the hopes, all the sentiments, all the passions which agitated the minds and hearts of men at that time. Among the oldest acquaintances of my relations I have seen several who were deeply engaged in the conspiracy, and among the new friends who were added that year to our Society I must reckon Edward Hudson and the unfortunate Robert Emmet. (24) Although it was forbidden to

(24) "The sole occasion," says Thomas Moore, "upon which during those perilous times, I entered into direct relation with the Society of United Irishmen, occurred through a certain * * * * at present holding an important place in the Government, and na-

treat, in our debates, on subjects touching on the politics of the day, it was easy to bring in Ireland either by digression or by an allusion, and the hopes that were opening then before her. Robert Emmet held our souls in his hands ; his character, calm and energetic, at the same time, gave him a singular authority over us, and we looked upon him as our superior. The effect that he produced, not only by his talents, but by the promptitude with which the audience caught up every allusion to the politics of the day, was such that the Government was alarmed. Those around him were so unable to answer him that the government sent one day among us a lawyer of middle age and great reputation at the bar, specially commissioned to answer Robert Emmet and to combat the bad effect produced by his speeches. It was in answering him one evening that, to the great mortification and surprise of all those who gloried in him and looked upon him as their chief, that Robert Emmet became embarrassed and visibly troubled. Whether he had for a moment lost the thread of his discourse, or rather (for Robert Emmet was as modest as he was talented and brave) that he considered it presumptuous in him to reply to an older man than he was in all the fire of his eloquence, he began to hesitate, to repeat his words, and then, after a useless effort to resume his discourse, sat down, and left us deeply humiliated to see our hero, for the first time, inferior to himself.

It is not precisely known at what time Robert Emmet naturally gone back from all those unpleasant pre-occupations. He met me one evening coming out of the University, and he proposed to have me admitted into that branch of the Society of which he was a member. I refused, and he spoke no more of it ; but that short conversation had nearly been fatal, at a later period, to me and all my family."

became a member of the United Irish Association. He was born and brought up in a family of conspirators. When between fifteen and sixteen years old, he was often present at their secret meetings, where Theobald Wolfe Tone stated his projects for the deliverance of his country, and was affected, it is said, by his spirited and manly eloquence. (25) The antecedents of his family pointed him out for the ill-will of the government; the ardour of his opinions and of his character, his revolutionary demeanour, the imprudence of his conduct, increased the dangers of his position.

At the commencement of the Insurrectionary movement, 1798, there appeared a journal, which was the organ of the United Irishmen, and its object was to prepare the public mind for an approaching Revolution. It was soon after suppressed by an arbitrary act of the Government. Thos. Addis Emmet and Arthur O'Connor wrote in it; and *The Press* had, for some time, great success. The editors were men eminent in science and literature: Dr. MacNevin; William Preston, one of the most learned men in Ireland; Dr. Drennan, a distinguished writer, and a friend of Dugald Stuart, &c. It is said that a little poem, written with rare

(25) Madden says that he has in his possession some military treatises which belonged to Robert Emmet, and among others, a "History of the Seven Years' War," by Colonel Templehoff, which is, throughout, annotated in pencil, in Emmet's hand, with all the care and application of a man who had given to every line of the work the minutest attention. The marginal notes and underlined passages have reference particularly to military operations in mountainous countries, and to the advantages which an observer of a quick and experienced eye may draw from them for attack and defence. "One may plainly see," says Madden, "that the reader has passed days and nights in the study of these works, and one may thereby judge of the nature of the pre-occupations by which, from his youth, Robert Emmet was absorbed."

talent, under the title of "The London Pride and Shamrock," was composed by Robert Emmet. The simplicity of the style, the ardent and sombre enthusiasm which discover themselves under his reserve, caused Robert to be recognised in the anagram of Trebor. On the subject of the journal Moore tells us an anecdote, the honour of which he most graciously attributes to his friend. *The Press* came to us, he says, three times a-week. In the evenings we devoured its contents, and I read it for my parents. It is easy to imagine that, with ardour for the cause, and the consciousness of possessing a certain talent for writing, I longed ardently to see some article of mine in the columns of this patriotic and popular paper. But the anxiety of my poor mother, whom my opinions made uneasy (a feeling more ardent in her than her zeal for the popular cause), made me fear for whatever might agitate or grieve her : the stormy times in which we lived were already enough to keep her in fear.

Moore ventured, however, to send to *The Press* a satire in verse, addressed to the students of Trinity College, seasoned (as he tells us) with the salt then in fashion—"Treason." With a trembling hand he deposited it in the letter-box. This satire, sparkling with animation and wit, has been printed in the Works of Moore : it turns Lord Castlereagh into ridicule in a very pleasant manner. "What was my surprise and emotion," says Moore, "when, in the evening, at the fire-side, in the presence of my parents, on opening the paper, I found, in the first page, and in the place of honour, my letter staring me in the face?" He had, however, though he trembled with emotion, self-possession enough to read it aloud, without its being remarked by his parents. He had even the satisfaction of hearing his talent praised, although

they considered the satire very bold. A few moments after Edward Hudson, one of his friends, whom he had chosen as his confidant, came into the room, and, looking at him in a significant way, said—"Well, you have seen"— He stopped, on catching Moore's glance. But maternal instinct was not deceived. Quick as lightning his mother understood all, and guessed what was going on. "This letter is by you, Tom," said she, looking at him with a look full of terror. His mother then begged of him never again to venture on such dangerous matters, and obtained from him the solemn promise that he should not do so again.

A few days after, in the course of one of those strolls into the country which he used to take in the evenings, Robert and I, he observes, happened to speak about my letter. Moore naturally boasted to his friend of that of which he had excused himself to his parents, and gave him to understand that he was the author of the letter. Then Emmet, with that almost feminine gentleness of manner which he possessed, and which is so often found in determined spirits, owned to me, adds Moore, that, on reading the letter, though pleased with its contents, he could not help regretting that the public attention had been thus drawn to the politics of the University, as it might have the effect of drawing the attention of the Government to the good spirit (as we both considered it) which was going on quietly there. "We live," said he, "in times too serious to make of the opposition to a power we detest and wish to overthrow a joke or an amusement." Even then, boyish as my own mind was, continues Moore, I remember how much I was struck with the manliness and simplicity of his character when he explained to me how, in times such as ours, the part of men was to act rather than to talk

or to write on their intentions. He was a noble fellow, in whose nature imagination and sensibility were blended with great energy and determination. I remember, one day, when I was sitting at the piano, that, when I had sung that lively and spirited air, like a call to arms, "*Let Erin Remember the Days of Old*," Robert Emmet awoke as from a long reverie, and said to me—"I would like to be at the head of twenty thousand men marching to that air." I make no doubt but, at that time, he was already a member of the United Irishmen; but he never mentioned it to me. I believe he was prevented from doing so in consideration for my parents, of whose uneasiness about me he was aware.

Perhaps, also, Robert Emmet did not consider his friend to be of the calibre of the men who stake their fortune and their life in revolutions. Of those two young men who wandered about Dublin in giving way to the musings of their minds, one was to perish, a few years after, a martyr to his opinions; the other was destined to immortalise his name in his poetry.

Among those who received young Emmet with kindness when he first entered into society was Lord Cloncurry, of all the noblemen in Ireland the most sincerely devoted to the cause of his country. He was one of the writers for *The Press*, and supported that paper with his fortune and his influence, and he became, at a later period, a member of the Executive Directory. He became most intimate then with Thomas Addis Emmet and his brother. "I little thought," says he, in his Memoirs, "when I saw at my house that intelligent, enthusiastic, and animated lad, that, six years after, he would organise a new insurrection, and, in punishment for his imprudence, lay his head on the scaffold!"

But it was particularly in his intimacy with the family of the celebrated lawyer, Curran, that Emmet passed his early youth. Curran had devoted his fiery talent to the popular cause; he was the legal defender of the rebels during the insurrection of 1798. Nothing could equal the effect of his pathetic speeches when, in the Court-house in Dublin, he disputed against the fury of the judges, against the corruption of the witnesses, for the life of some unhappy victim whom the scaffold awaited as he passed from the trial. When unable to snatch his victim from the hands of the executioner, Curran at least protested against the way in which the forms of justice were outraged.

(26) The uncertain glimmer of the lamps, (27) the haggard visages, the knitted brows, the passionate attitude of the crowd, partaking all the emotions of the accused, gave a sinister aspect to those nocturnal sittings. They seemed like some frightful apparition of a fantastic tale. Of low stature, careless in his dress, with undistinguished manners and accent in the commonplace events of life, Curran's eyes, when he spoke, became radiant with soul, and their flashes shed a light on the whole assembly. The union of pathos and humour combined to form the most powerful

(26) See the famous dialogue between Curran and Lord Kilwarden in the trial of Theobald Wolfe Tone. It proves that, even in those days of sad memory for England, some, at least, of her magistrates preserved a love of justice and a respect for law. Curran is said to have owed his life in those disastrous times only to the protection of Lord Kilwarden, whom he regarded as his guardian angel. In spite of the inviolable fidelity which he always retained to the English Government he would, but for it, have run great risk of mounting that scaffold against which he contended for its victims.—*Phillips' Recollections of Curran.*

(27) The Court often sat the whole night.—*Life of Curran, by his Son.*

effects of his eloquence. After having risen to the highest flights of oratory he used to change suddenly in tone, accent, and manner, in order to disconcert some wretched witness bought over with gold or threatened with death, and he transformed himself into an Irish peasant, caustic, artless, and homely. Vigour and originality of talent, gravity and gaiety, emotion and irony, alternate in his conversation. When Curran depicted any one, said Phillips, the sketch was so true, the colours so lively, the slightest peculiarities so finely observed, that, with his wonderful talent for imitation, he made the portrait thus playfully traced the very man himself appearing before your eyes. Grouped around Curran were men of eminence in every walk of life in Ireland. In his country house, at some miles from Dublin, he received a numerous society, composed of artists, poets, politicians, and, above all, young men who came to gain instruction from the conversation of the bold "tribune" of Ireland.

Among those young men was Robert Emmet, whose attraction to Curran's house was not politics alone. (28) There was then in the home of the celebrated lawyer a young girl scarcely eighteen. She was not, it is said, beautiful, but she was better than beautiful—it was impossible to forget her when once she had been seen. Her slight and elegant figure, her large dark eyes, often cast down, the expression of which was tender and modest at the same time, the gentleness of her every movement, gave to her whole person an indescribable charm. (29) "The Irish,"

(28) "Mr. Robert Emmet, a young gentleman of highly respectable family, of very striking talents and interesting manners, was in the habit of visiting at Mr. Curran's house," &c.—*Life of Curran*.

(29) All these particulars respecting Miss Curran are exactly true. I need not say that I do not permit myself to invent the slightest circumstance.

says Byron, "boast of their Eastern descent; and, in truth, the wildness, the tenderness, the lively colours of their imagination, the ardent and exalted spirit of the sons of Ireland, the beauty and the Asiatic grace of her daughters, would plead in favour of this opinion." All those who knew Miss Curran describe her as an ardent and timid being, reserved and silent, without a will of her own, but capable of deep affection, and ready for every sacrifice in favour of the object of her affections.

. A maiden never bold
Of spirit so still and quiet that her motion
Blushed at herself.

There is in the sad and touching history of this unfortunate girl a vague poetry which reminds us of the immortal creations of Byron and Shakspeare. The fame and misfortunes of her love have engraven her name for ever in the annals of her country.

Who can think, says Madden, of the darling of Ireland, of the heroic youth of 1803, and forget her whose name is for ever inseparable from his? It must be supposed that Robert Emmet, whose mind was as pure as his soul was elevated, and his principles severe, did not lightly place the choice of his affections. He became deeply attached to Miss Curran; and we can easily conceive that, combining in his person and mind everything to captivate the imagination of a woman, he needed no great effort to gain the affections of a young girl of eighteen, with whom he was passionately in love. An innocent and timid affection, as ardent as it was pure, sprung up between these two young people. Of the origin and the progress of their attachment we know very little. With that proud and delicate reserve natural to the Irish in everything relating to the affections of the heart, Mr. William Henry Curran, in the "Life of

his Father," reveals as little as possible of this domestic drama which came before public observation. He has merely published two letters of Robert Emmet's, adding—"These letters contain all that is to be told;" and he seems to forbid the curiosity of the indifferent from seeking for further details. It was from a woman named Anne Devlin, who had been in the service of Emmet, and was the bearer of messages between the lovers, that the little we know was learned. "Whenever I took a letter from Mr. Robert to Miss Curran," said Anne Devlin, "her countenance changed and grew pale." Curran, after some time, thought he perceived some slight indication of Robert's passion for his daughter, and of the intimacy existing between them. He expressed his displeasure, and became cool to Robert Emmet, whom, until then, he had received with great kindness. He had the highest opinion of his character and talents. "I would have depended more on his word," he used to say, "than on the oath of any other man." But he knew that Emmet was drawn by his family and by the ardour of his opinions into a path which he considered dangerous. He was, however, far from suspecting how deeply his daughter's heart was already engaged, and he had only vague suspicions about the matter. From that time a connection was established between Robert and Miss Curran which, during absence, was maintained by a close correspondence. (30)

(30) After the arrest of Robert Emmet this correspondence fell into the hands of Major Sirr, who destroyed it some years after, "through pity," he said, "the letters of the young lady were so touching!" We may well believe that the letters were touching, indeed, if they could move Major Sirr, one of the Proconsuls of 1798, nicknamed the "Verres of Ireland," a man enriched by robbery and peculation, and accustomed to subject his neighbours to the various kinds of torture then practised in that unhappy country.

It was about this time that a friend of the family officiously informed Moore's parents that the intimacy of their son with Robert Emmet had been remarked, and that, for the sake of his future career, and even of his actual safety, he should cease appearing with him in public. This information was followed by a solemn Visitation of the Lord Chancellor (Lord Clare) to the University, the result of which was, that nineteen students known for their extreme opinions were expelled. Among these were Corbett (31), Power, Ardagh, Slattery, Carroll, Russell, and Robert Emmet. All were more or less suspected of being connected with secret Societies, and of holding meetings in their rooms, at which the boldest measures were discussed. An inquisitorial tribunal was formed in the University, before which each student, in his turn, was obliged to appear to take the oath of allegiance to the British Government, and to denounce those of his comrades who were supposed to belong to the Association of United Irishmen. Each pupil was there invited to become an informer under penalty of seeing his career closed against him. Robert Emmet and some others refused to appear before this tribunal, and were declared contumacious and their names struck off the roll of the University. Thomas Moore appeared, but refused to denounce his comrades. Persecution at once commenced against the friends of Emmet, and a distinguished young man, named Dacre Hamilton, who was very intimate with him, less on political grounds than by a similar taste and talent for mathematics, was also expelled from the University. Whatever may have been his speculative interest in the popular cause, says Thomas Moore, he was as innocent as myself of all knowledge of the plots of United

(31) Since a General in the French Army.

Irishmen. But he appeared before the tribunal, and refused to denounce his comrades ; and this sufficed to ruin him. Robert Emmet, on this occasion, addressed a letter to the authorities of the College, and to the Rector of the University, protesting against his expulsion, and denouncing the odious conduct of the Government. Before sending his letter he submitted it to the examination of his father, whose full approbation it received. This arbitrary act, which excluded him from every liberal profession, contributed to plunge him deeper into conspiracy. From that time he became one of the most active agents of the United Irishmen, and in that capacity executed several secret and perilous missions. He learned from a good source that he could no longer remain with safety in Ireland, and thought it prudent to leave the country for some time. Before his departure for the Continent he went to Fort St. George, from which his brother was on the eve of being transported. After having spent two months with him he passed through Dublin, however, where he attended the stormy debates which preceded the act of the Union and the last meetings of the Irish Parliament, June, 1800.

The sagacious mind of the distinguished statesmen who then ruled the destinies of England had long before conceived the project of the union of the two kingdoms. In 1800, taking advantage of the exhausted state of the country, and of the just unpopularity into which the Parliament had fallen, Mr. Pitt at length accomplished this profound political design, in contempt of morality and good faith. The Bill of the Union was bought of a corrupted parliament, and imposed upon a crushed people. The Irish Parliament, in which only Protestants sat, and from which Catholics were excluded, had been, for long years, but an instrument of tyranny in the hands of England.

During the insurrection, and after its failure, it had, without a show of resistance, lent its sanction to the violent and illegal measures of repression demanded by the Lord Lieutenant. However, even in this servile Parliament the breath of liberty kindled by the Rebellion was the cause of establishing a liberal and patriotic opposition. In 1782 it had obtained from the British Government measures favourable to Irish commercial freedom, and, having organised a national army, called the Volunteers, Grattan, the champion of the nation at this time, wrested from England the usurped power of making laws for Ireland. The brilliant constellation of orators, of whom Grattan was the chief glory, continued but a short time on the horizon. Discouraged by their fruitless efforts to avert the unrelaxed designs of Government, and tired of struggling against tyranny, the members of the Opposition retired, and only reappeared for one moment to protest against the Act of Union. A Parliament which, after having oppressed, without pity, the country it was supposed to represent, and which ended by selling itself for money, did not merit to be much regretted; and if it is acknowledged that every means are justifiable to attain an object, we may, without reserve, admire the Act of Union. It was an act of skilful policy, certainly, as far as England was concerned, and even with regard to Ireland, if once the possibility of a separation be not admitted.

At first sight it often seems that, of three parties, the intermediate one is the most practical. Sometimes, in reality, it is the most chimerical, or, at least, the one which presents the greatest difficulties. Bold measures are, in certain cases, more in conformity with reason than moderation and the "*juste milieu*." It is the habit of politicians to lavish disdain upon each other. The United Irishmen

accused the moderate patriots of weakness and hesitation (they called them "trimmers"); the latter treated them again as madmen. Nothing, however, would have been so difficult as to make Ireland a free country, with its own rights, its constitution, its commerce untrammelled, its Catholics emancipated, and yet to have it attached to the crown of England. As long as Ireland remained a vanquished nation she remained an oppressed nation. It was by abdicating her existence as a nation, and consenting to become a province of England, that she might find grace one day with her powerful sister. The pride of England would have tolerated beside her the existence of an altogether independent nation, far rather than that of a free country which did not depend on her for its liberty. The Emancipation of the Catholics, introducing into Parliament a hostile majority, would have immediately brought about separation. It does not result from this that it was either possible or honourable for an Irishman to consent to such a compromise. There are certain unfortunate positions in which honour and dignity forbid us to adopt what a sort of wisdom, not of a very high order, would counsel. England did not even propose a bargain to Ireland, but only gave her, in exchange for the sacrifice she demanded, vague promises, which might never be realised. At that time, at least, these promises were a lie; it was thirty years afterwards that England found herself obliged to yield to the powerful march of time. The resistance made to the Act of Union by moderate patriots, devoted to the interests of their country while they remained faithful to the English Government, was an inconsistency, but an honourable inconsistency. If the Parliament had always been anti-national, still the right to make laws and to be self-governed was a national right. This humiliating degrada-

tion, which gave up Ireland as a conquered province to the mercy of her oppressors, awakened from one extremity of the country to the other every noble passion and patriotic sentiment. Besides, the transaction was a shameful one : the English Government achieved by corruption the work begun by terror (32). In fact, it is very hard not to coincide with Grattan when he said—"One might, in these times, be a rebel and an honest man ; but one could not be an honest man and a partisan of the English Ministers."

The last sittings of the Irish Parliament have a dramatic interest. We are present at the mortal agony of a people. Grattan, sick almost to death, caused himself to be carried—as Lord Chatham was, to the House of Lords, the theatre of his former glory—to that House in which his voice was heard, eighteen years before, asserting the rights and liberties of his country—to protest once more, and for the last time, against her degradation. He advanced with a faltering step, and, by an involuntary movement of respect, the whole assembly rose at his

(32) Lord Castlereagh displayed in all that transaction an astonishing arrogance and contempt for human nature. "And what would you say, my lord," exclaimed an honest member of Parliament to whom he had just made the most barefaced proposals of corruption, "were I to publish what you have just proposed to me?" "What would I say?" replied his lordship calmly, looking at him with his fine countenance and that clear metallic eye which distinguished him: "in all likelihood I should deny it; and I rather think that, of us two, it is not you that handles best the sword and the pistol." It is well known that Lord Castlereagh, who was Irish by birth, had at first taken his place in the ranks of the patriotic Opposition; changing sides, he afterwards made his political fortune by giving over to England the interests and honour of his country.

approach. His voice was feeble, his breathing short : he asked for permission to speak sitting, not being able to stand. A general acclamation of assent responded to his request, and, forgetting by degrees his weakness, he spoke during two hours (33). He recalled to mind all the wrongs, all the sufferings, of Ireland, the treason and the severity of England towards her, the violence and the corruption alternately employed by Pitt and Lord Castlereagh to attain their aims, and terminated by this pathetic conclusion : “The Constitution may be, for a time, so lost—the character of the country may be so lost—the Ministers of the Crown will, or may, perhaps, at length, find that it is not so easy to put down for ever an ancient and a respectable nation by abilities however great, and by power and corruption however irresistible. Liberty may repair her golden beams, and with redoubled heart animate the country. The cry of loyalty will not long continue against the principles of liberty. The cry of the connection will not, in the end, avail against the principles of liberty. Connection is a wise and profound policy ; but connection without an Irish Parliament is connection without its principle, without analogy of condition, without the pride of honour that should attend it ; it is innovation, it is peril, it is subjugation—not connection. Yet I do not give up the country : I see her in a swoon, but she is not dead. Though in her tomb she lies, helpless and motionless, still there is on her lips a spirit of life, and on her cheek a glow of beauty—

Thou art not conquered ; beauty’s ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death’s pale flag is not advanced here.

(33) See Barrington : *Historical Anecdotes of the Legislative Union*. And Grattan’s *Life and Times*.

While a plank of the vessel sticks together I will not leave her. Let the courtier present his flimsy sail and carry the light barque of his faith with every new breath of wind. I will remain anchored here, with fidelity to the fortunes of my country—faithful to her freedom, faithful to her fall !”

The day on which the Act of Union was voted the galleries were crowded with spectators palpitating with the same emotions. The system of bribery publicly carried on in the Parliament was known, and yet they hoped. Lord Castlereagh, confident in success, awaited, unmoved, and with a smile on his lips, the result of the vote. The agitation of the heart was seen on every countenance. A stifled murmur rose in the interior and outside of the assembly, when the Speaker, rising and holding the Bill of the Union in his hand, said, in a low voice, “Let those who are in favour of the Union raise their hands.” A faint “Aye,” as if ashamed of the affirmation, answered the appeal. The Speaker looked slowly round the house, and remained a few moments motionless, like a statue. “The Act of Union is passed,” said he, at last ; then, with a movement of indignation and disgust that he could not repress, he threw down the Bill on the table and fell back into his chair. During these stormy debates, says Lord Cloncurry, while the high priests of the Constitution, the orators, and the lawyers, proclaimed, with vehemence, in the temple of the laws, that resistance was an obligation and insurrection a duty, a young man in the gallery listened, in solemn silence, to what was going on, and made a secret vow that he would one day effect the deliverance of his country.

III.

WHEN Robert Emmet started for the Continent, Ireland vanquished and mutilated, gave no longer any sign of life. The silence of the tomb had succeeded to the convulsive movements which preceded the Union. Under this apparent stillness, however, the hot embers of conspiracy constantly existed, ready to blaze out at the first breath of hope.

Travelling as a young man whose object was to finish his studies and seek for amusement, Robert was, in reality, a secret agent of the United Irishmen—he was, sooner or later, to renew with France and the First Consul the negotiations concluded between the insurgents of 1798 and the French Republic. No doubt, the circumstances did not appear favourable to him, and it is likely that his mission was neither precise nor very pressing, for he travelled two years on the Continent, visited Holland, Switzerland, the South of France, and, later, Cadiz, accompanied by Mr. John Allen,—one of the State prisoners formerly detained at Fort St. George, and set at liberty with Thomas Addis Emmet. It was in the autumn of 1802, when the growing bitterness and irritation in the relations between England and France made the rupture of the Peace of Amiens easy to foresee, that we find Robert in Paris, where he met his brother again, and also Arthur O'Connor, MacNevin, Lord Cloncurry, and all the Irish refugees. He passed two months in Paris; and then it was that he had an opportunity of obtaining a glance at that brilliant and light-hearted society, which, having passed through the dark and stormy

days of the French Revolution, awoke with joy to the marvels of life and civilisation.

The First Consul never ceased during these years to be in communication with Ireland and the Irish then in Paris. Meditating already the invasion of England, he had enrolled in the army an Irish Brigade. Among the changing schemes of conquest which were fermenting in his brain he thought of using Ireland as the key which was to open for him a passage into the United Kingdom. There exist in the general archives of France curious documents relative to the communications of the First Consul and the chief men among the Irish emigrants. "Affairs in Ireland," wrote the First Consul to the Minister of Naval Affairs, "make me feel the importance of having private conferences with the Irish who are in Paris." (34) Two long letters of Thomas Emmet's, addressed to the First Consul and to the Minister of War, are, no doubt, an answer to these advances. Thomas Addis Emmet, at the same time that he protested this confidence in the promises of the First Consul, and his assurances that he had no doubt of the sincere interest felt for the independence of Ireland, takes great care to repeat to him, in different forms, that the landing of the French in his native country would be the signal for their extermination if they presented themselves as conquerors and not as allies. "The slightest suspicion," said he, on this subject, "would suffice to throw Ireland back into the arms of England." Robert Emmet, on his arrival in Paris, had an interview with the First Consul, and several successive ones with Monsieur de Talleyrand,

(34) Archives of the Empire : Irish Affairs. The letter of the First Consul, which we publish hereafter, is a reply to the letters of T. A. Emmet.

then Minister of Foreign Affairs. It would be very curious to know what may have been the conversation between General Bonaparte and the young Irish enthusiast. Unfortunately, Madden gives no details on the subject, and I have sought in vain for some trace of this conversation. It is only known that Robert Emmet came out dissatisfied with this interview. The First Consul inspired him, he said, with no confidence; he cared no more about Ireland than he did about the Republic or Liberty. He thought he could discover in the torrent of his words but one sincere intention—that of declaring war with as little delay as possible. He also believed that the First Consul seriously intended invading England as soon as war should be declared. And he was firmly resolved not to offer him the means of setting foot on the soil of Ireland. He was not much more satisfied with Monsieur de Talleyrand, and found him very ignorant about the affairs of his country. He thought, however, that he might be led, in case of a rupture with England, to act seriously for the deliverance of Ireland, and to establish her as an independent Republic supported by the alliance of France. What may well surprise us, says Madden, is, that it was the youngest of the Irishmen then in Paris who showed the greatest penetration, sagacity, and distrust, in his communications with the First Consul. Robert Emmet was, however, very susceptible of illusions about what concerned his cause, but it is not rare to find united to a just and sagacious judgment an ardour of feeling which, on certain points, veils reality. Youth and enthusiasm in sentiments sometimes lead to no illusion in judging individuals. Besides, no great perspicuity was necessary to divine that the First Consul, in mixing himself up with the struggle between England and Ireland, could have no other

intention than, as it is said, "*de mettre les plaideurs d'accord.*" But division, that bane of vanquished parties, had then penetrated among the Irish refugees. (35) In the rage of party spirit certain Irishmen, among whom we must count Arthur O'Connor, at last desired a change of masters at any price, and would have preferred the domination of France to the intolerable oppression of England. Robert Emmet and his brother were not of that number ; they appear to have appreciated better the difficulties and dangers of the situation. It may be, however, that, at that epoch, Ireland would have found this change a profitable one. She would have gained liberty of conscience. The yoke of France would certainly have been less oppressive than that of England, and would not have been aggravated by that antipathy of race which renders the domination of the stranger so hateful. Although it was easy even then to see in the First Consul the future Emperor, nothing yet announced that which he afterwards showed himself : the victor of Arcola and of Marengo, the liberator of Italy, was still the chief of the French Republic. It was, however, in some degree, in spite of himself, and in deference to the chiefs of his party, that Robert Emmet consented to treat of the affairs of Ireland with this powerful and dangerous ally. In order to show his brother that he was not mistaken in affirming that they could not in any way confide in the First Consul, Robert managed to get the copy of a despatch of Mr. Otto, then in London, to the effect that, if England would consent to expel from her territory the French émi-

(35) "There were in Ireland," says MacNevin, "as many opinions as there were men: each party was divided into infinitely varying shades, and each had its particular plan for the safety of the country."—*Pieces of Irish History.*

grants suspected by the First Consul, the latter would act with reciprocity, and put at the disposal of England the refugees who sought an asylum in France. These refugees were no other than the Irish with whom he had been negotiating for two years past.

However, it appears that the dissatisfaction was mutual, and the First Consul showed himself anything but pleased with the conferences he had with the principal chiefs of the Irish refugees. Perhaps his own practical sense inspired him with a little contempt for what seemed chimerical in their projects ; perhaps, also, his instinctive love of power in every form made him, in spite of his hatred for England at that time, prefer her cause to that of Ireland, weak and oppressed. General Bonaparte's soul was not equal to his genius ; his powerful intellect, indeed, saw everything in a grand and true light : but that genuine elevation which comes from the soul was always wanting in him. A marvel in the Council Chamber and on the field of battle,—without dignity, without greatness at Fontainebleau and at St. Helena, when he found himself alone in the presence of adversity—he has, perhaps to the misfortune of France, left an ineffaceable impression upon the country which he dazzled while he lowered it.

We are, however, deceived when we imagine men to be consistent in evil as in good, and often the deepest politicians have not all the calculation and all the perfidy that we attribute to them. It may then be that, at that time, the First Consul had, in reality, no evil intentions with regard to Ireland, although there was certainly no ground for trusting him in the future. It is even probable that he did not take the trouble of asking himself if his promises were sincere. Some days after, having received the letter

of Thomas Addis Emmet, General Bonaparte sent him the following reply :— (36)

“ The First Consul has read with the greatest attention the memoir addressed to him by Monsieur Emmet, the 13th Nivose. He wishes the United Irishmen to be convinced that his intention is to assure the independence of Ireland. The general who is to command the expedition shall be the bearer of sealed letters, by which the First Consul will declare that he will not make peace with England without stipulating for the independence of Ireland ;—on the condition, however, that the French army shall have been joined by a considerable number of United Irishmen. (37)

“ Ireland shall, in all respects, be treated as America was in the late war.

“ Every individual who shall embark with the French army destined for the expedition shall be considered as a French subject. If he be arrested, and not treated as a prisoner of war, reprisals shall be exercised on English prisoners.

“ The First Consul wishes a Committee of United Irishmen to be formed. He sees no inconvenience in the members of this Committee issuing proclamations and informing their fellow-countrymen of the state of affairs.

“ These proclamations shall be inserted in the *Argus* and

(36) The original of this letter has been found among the papers of T. A. Emmet. Madden says that no doubt can be raised as to its authenticity. Presuming that the copy or a duplicate of the letter existed, perhaps, at the *Archives Generales* of France, I have made searches on the subject, but as yet without success.

(37) The First Consul himself designed the standard of the Irish Legion. The flag was green. On one side was inscribed, “ *Independance de l'Irlande;*” on the other, “ *Libertè de Conscience.*”—[Madden.]

in various journals of Europe, in order to enlighten the Irish on the part they have to play and the hopes they may entertain. Should this Committee desire to give a relation of the acts of tyranny perpetrated against Ireland by the English Government it shall be inserted in the *Moniteur*."

As soon as the approaching rupture between France and England was known in Ireland the country was roused from the lethargy in which it had been plunged since the Union. The hopes and passions of the people were re-kindled—a future dawned above the horizon. Discontent was then as general and as deep as in 1798. There was, however, all the difference imaginable between the discouragement which follows defeat and the ardour which precedes the struggle. "If we do not attend to Ireland we shall lose it," wrote Lord Charles Bentinck: "that people is as ready as ever for rebellion." In a letter from Lord Grenville to the Marquis of Wellesley the following passage is to be remarked—"I do not know whether the war which our wise ministers are on the eve of declaring will not keep you in India. I hope, however, to see you next year in Ireland, supposing that, next year, there shall be still an Ireland belonging to England."

Robert Emmet was not the author and instigator of the Conspiracy of 1803, although his name remains connected with that heroic and unhappy attempt. He was in France when he learned that a rising was in preparation, and consented to take a part in the conspiracy. There exists relative to this crisis in the different narratives published a certain contradiction. According to Madden, Robert Emmet had received before his departure the approbation of the chiefs of the United Irishmen then in Paris. In fact, MacNevin gave him a proclamation calling on the Irish people to revolt; and we find, in a letter of Thomas

Emmet, speaking of his intended departure for America, these express words : If the rumours of war be confirmed our projects will be completely changed ; there will be again something to attempt in Ireland. The letters to the First Consul seem also to attest that Thomas Addis Emmet had by no means renounced the hope of an approaching revolution in Ireland with assistance from the French. It is even said that Lord Cloncurry was engaged in the conspiracy, and, as a proof, the fact is relied on of a depot of arms having been discovered in his country house at Lyons after the failure of the Insurrection of 1803. Lord Cloncurry relates, on the contrary, that the day before Robert left Paris he dined with him and Thomas Addis Emmet. They examined together the chances of success, and, everything being well considered, not finding them sufficient, they made, he says, vain efforts to dissuade the young enthusiast from engaging in such a perilous undertaking. It is difficult to get at the truth between these two versions ; the history of the denial of St. Peter is always that of unsuccessful affairs—every one then pretends that he had opposed what, perhaps, he had strenuously encouraged. Whatever Lord Cloncurry and Thomas Addis Emmet may have thought, the moment for armed resistance, in reality, had ceased to be for Ireland. When a nation has failed in the grave and perilous enterprise of revolution there are always strong reasons against beginning again and trying another struggle. Nothing was changed at that time in the position of this unhappy country, and the promises made at the time of the Union were by no means kept : a new aggravation of her wrongs. However, a certain mildness and moderation had succeeded to violent oppression since Ireland had fallen from the rank of a nation to that of a province.

In this respect, the administration of Lord Hardwicke and of the Addington ministry did not resemble that of Pitt and Lord Castlereagh. In fine, if we were here called on to appreciate the conduct of the two brothers we might say that one was irreproachable, and that the other, although certainly well deserving of interest, is not exempt from blame. And yet admiration and sympathy will ever remain for those heroic and hopeless attempts of nations and parties to escape from a fate which condemns them to vain struggles—

“*Que voulez-vous qu'il fit contre trois ?.....*”

and leaves them only the refuge of the vanquished—death. Such errors are still, as has been said of the philosophical errors of Leibnitz, titles of glory for humanity.

Robert Emmet, before starting for Ireland, had a last interview with the First Consul. He received from him the assurance that hostilities would begin in the month of May, and that the landing of the French troops would take place in the month of August. Everything was calculated in order to make the rising in Ireland coincide with the expedition to England. The negotiation with the First Consul was limited to this. Robert Emmet exhibited an invincible repugnance to go further, and to induce the French to land in Ireland. Who can tell what would have happened had the expedition taken place, and had the Insurrection of Dublin succeeded? These suppositions are in no way strange or impossible to one who is not a mere fatalist in history. Those who see events necessarily producing each other should apply, in predicting the future, the laws which seem so clear to them in the past. Whoever has lived in times of revolutions must have perceived, on the contrary, the part that unexpected events

play in this world. At a certain moment, without any apparent cause, the wheel turns one way—it might just as well have turned in a contrary direction. Such was the opinion of the First Consul. With his marvellous instinct and his profound experience, he knew that the direction of the greatest events often depends on the chance of the most insignificant circumstances. “On what depends the fate of empires !” said he, at St. Helena : “if, in place of the expedition of Egypt, I had made that of Ireland ; if some trifling obstacles had not prevented my expedition of Boulogne, where would England be to-day ?”

In order to escape suspicion, Robert Emmet returned to Ireland by Holland and England. At Amsterdam he separated from his brother, whom he was destined never to see again. Having come to the resolution of meddling no further in Irish affairs, and of becoming a citizen of America, Thomas Addis Emmet endeavoured to keep his young brother with him, and gave at parting prudent advice, which, for his happiness at least, he would have done better to follow.

IV.

ROBERT EMMET arrived in Ireland in the month of November, 1802. He immediately put himself in communication with those who had sent for him from Paris. Nearly all were former leaders of the Rebellion of 1798. "But, besides 'these,'" says Madden, "there were behind the curtain men of high rank, who were aware of the conspiracy, knew all its springs, and directed its movements." "It will be understood," adds he, "by what sentiment of delicacy I do not insert here the names of those whose connection with the movement is not known, and who have rendered, since then, great service to the country, and whose families may wish to have the secret kept." It is certain, even taking into consideration what may be lightly advanced in these conjectures, that the conspiracy of 1803 was much more extended than is generally believed. The Union had ruined Dublin, and the upper classes, as dissatisfied as the people since the suppression of the Parliament, were more or less engaged in it. Among the noblemen who are supposed to have been engaged in the conspiracy Lord Meath is mentioned, and Lord Wycombe, who frequently visited Robert Emmet a short time before the Insurrection. They were informed of the conspiracy, they desired its success, and they assisted it, perhaps, by their fortunes, but did not choose to take any ostensible part in it. (38) Robert,

(38) "When Robert Emmet appeared before the Court," says the *Nation* (1855), "the seal of secrecy was already upon his lips, and we could never know the names of those who had engaged in the conspiracy with him, or who had, at least, given him promises

who was supposed to have come back to Dublin only for his personal affairs, often went into society, and frequented again Curran's house, where he saw that being the memory of whom never left his mind during these years of absence. Madden tells us that at a dinner at Mr. Keogh's a very animated conversation took place between Robert and a certain Mr. C——, a political personage of some importance, whom he does not think fit to name fully. Naturally, they spoke of the state of the country, and the dispositions of the people to renew the struggle. Robert expressed vehemently his hope of success if a new effort were made to shake off the yoke. Mr. C—— appeared more discouraged and more distrustful. "On how many counties, my dear Robert, according to you, might we count in case of a new Insurrection?" "On nineteen," answered Robert Emmet. "Do you not think," added he, "that we could act with less?" Mr. C—— reflected for some instants. "Well, my dear friend, give me two of them only, of which you are sure, and I am with you."

In the month of March a message from King George the Third announced to the Parliament the rupture with France, and the commencement of hostilities. It was then that the terrors of an approaching invasion beginning to take possession of the minds of the people in England the conspirators decided upon putting their projects seriously

of assistance. In his memorable speech he said, however, that there were above him men before whom he bowed with respectful deference; and there is every reason to think that those men were Lord Meath and Lord Wycombe."

"John Henry, Earl of W——," says Madden, who does not think fit to name him fully, "was born in 1765, inherited the title of Marquis of Lansdowne the 9th of May, 1805, and died in 1809."

into execution. Among the most eminent men who compromised themselves personally in the conspiracy, and some of whom were the chiefs of the Insurrection, was General Russell, one of the instigators of the Rebellion of 1798. With talents of a less elevated order perhaps than those of Robert Emmet, General Russell was not inferior to him in honour or integrity. He was a Protestant, like most of the chiefs of the Rebellion of 1798 and of the Conspiracy of 1803, and of very enthusiastic religious opinions. So were Fitzgerald, Philip Long, Hamilton Rowan, Malachy Delany, son of a rich landowner in the neighbourhood of Dublin, John Allen (39), Samuel Neilson, Byrne, of the County of Wexford (40), William Dowdall (41), Colonel Plunkett, since Lord Dunsany, &c., &c. A woman's name must be added, Mrs. Biddy Palmer, whom Madden calls an Irish Madame Roland, and who was one of the most active agents of the conspiracy. Her brother had been an officer under the orders of Lord Edward Fitzgerald. All those conspirators were honourable men, some occupying rather elevated stations in society and possessing considerable fortunes.

(39) Since a Colonel in the French army.

(40) Since a Colonel in the French army. After the defeat of 1803, as after that of 1798, America and France received the survivors of the wreck. I have had the advantage of seeing M. Byrne, who, at a distance of more than fifty years, speaks of Robert Emmet with respectful tenderness, and retains in his voluntary exile all the sentiments of a rebel of 1798.

(41) A friend of Grattan. He was, says Grattan's son, in his *Memoirs*, a young man of distinguished abilities, and of an interesting character, carried away by the ardour of his opinions into the path of conspiracy, &c., &c.

I close here this list of names unknown at the present day, and which would, therefore, be but uninteresting to the reader.

“Outside of them,” adds Madden, “there was a great number of men distinguished for rank and intelligence who were acquainted with the conspiracy, and encouraged it with their secret sympathy.” But the chief, the soul, the life of the plot was Robert Emmet. This plan, which was one of the boldest, was not without chances of success. It seems to have been similar to that found in the papers of Lord Edward Fitzgerald at the time he was arrested. Taught by the experience of the past, the conspirators of 1803 thought that the Insurrection of 1798 had failed because it had been too much spread over the country, and wanted a centre of operation. The important point, they thought, was to first take possession of the City and Castle of Dublin at the same time that they kept up intelligence with the principal counties—Wicklow, Wexford, Carlow, Kildare, &c. By means of certain concerted signals the success or the failure was to be immediately known all through the country ; and there is no doubt that had the Insurrection succeeded in Dublin, all Ireland would have risen, and that a national war, more or less long, more or less successful, would have followed. This plan had, besides, in the mind of Robert Emmet, the advantage of avoiding as much as possible the shedding of blood, and of not risking partial and useless combats, in case the first blow failed. The attack of Dublin was to have coincided with the landing of the French in England in August.

External circumstances were most favourable. At that moment the attention of England, entirely pre-occupied with France, left Ireland almost abandoned. All her military preparations were made exclusively with a view to her own defence, and to such an extent that, on the day of the Insurrection, there was not ammunition enough for the regiments of artillery and cavalry to which the defence of Dublin was

confided. Until half-past seven in the evening the doors of the Castle remained open ; there was no difficulty in entering. Informed by secret intelligence of every movement of the Privy Council, Robert Emmet and some of the most determined among the conspirators were to enter by force into the Castle and take possession of it ; while the peasantry of Wicklow, of Wexford, and Kildare, already put to the proof in the Rebellion of 1798, and placed under the direction of confidential men, were to make a descent upon the city, and attack it on the opposite side. Once in possession of the Castle, and by that means of the city, they were then to call a meeting of the two hundred patriotic members of the old House of Commons. Those present in Dublin, and who were aware of the conspiracy, would then have been constituted into a Provisional Government. It would appear that the historic example ever present to Robert Emmet's mind was that of the fortunate Revolution of Portugal, accomplished in 1640, under precisely the same conditions. Forty determined men, at that epoch, penetrated into the interior of the Castle of Lisbon, made themselves masters of the Vice-Queen and the Spanish authorities, and, followed by the people, delivered their country from the yoke of Spain. (42)

(42) Robert Emmet himself, after his arrest, drew up the detailed plan of the Insurrection for Dublin, and described the causes, purely accidental, according to him, which made it fail. This plan is divided into lines of attack, of defence, and of retreat. and is, it is said, a skilful combination. Such purely military and technical details would, I think, be uninteresting to the reader ; but the plan is not the less very curious as a historical document.

The plan was found at the Castle some years after the defeat of the Insurrection of 1803, and was published by Mr. William H. Curran in the Life of his Father.

“ When we examine the plan of attack, of retreat, and of de-

During the months which immediately preceded the Insurrection, Robert Emmet went to reside at Mrs. Palmer's, under the name of Hewitt, in a lodging situated in the centre of the city, and near the populous quarters. There, day and night, without interval or rest, he directed and watched over the preparations for the Insurrection. He

fence traced by the master hand of Robert Emmet," says the *Dublin Nation* (5th May, 1855), "the calculations on which it was based, and the accidents which caused it to fail, it is impossible not to feel that the Government escaped by a sort of miracle. The depot of the rebels had been for months in the neighbourhood of the Castle, and yet the Lord Lieutenant, a few hours before the Insurrection, was informed of nothing, and had no preparation made when it broke out. All the guard he could procure was a patrol of police. The Castle was even without military stores. Robert Emmet, on his side, had certainly more than enough of force in point of men and arms. His stores of ammunition and arms were immense. At the depot in Thomas Street alone Lord Blaquiere found more than 20,000 pikes, abundance of muskets, powder, and balls. At the very last hour, however, all failed, through a series of accidents and mistakes that no human sagacity could foresee and no skill could repair. Napoleon Bonaparte himself might have failed in similar circumstances." The fact is, however, that, in 1803, as in 1798, the instrument failed in the hands of those who wished to work with it. If the chiefs of the conspiracy had had under their orders a people as intelligent and resolute as the people of Paris, this project, perhaps, would not have been a chimera. But the noble spirits who dreamed of the independence of Ireland were generals without an army, or rather with an army which betrayed them and was unworthy of them. Lord Edward Fitzgerald, like Robert Emmet, had to deal with a childish people, at once rash and timid, always ready for revolt because of their sufferings, but not knowing how to look their masters in the face—in short, a people having some of the vices of slavery, for which, after all, the oppressor is more answerable than the oppressed.

devoted to the purchase of arms and ammunition all the fortune he had just inherited by the death of his father, and which was considerable. He displayed, every one owned, much skill and prudence, and a rare talent of organisation in the direction of so difficult an undertaking. Several houses were hired in the different quarters of Dublin. In them was carried on incessantly the fabrication of arms, powder, balls, pikes, and rockets, to be used for signals on the day of the Insurrection. And Robert Emmet's exertions were not confined to Dublin—he had agents in all the adjoining countries. Strange to say, the greatest secrecy was religiously observed, and among so many men necessarily informed of what was going on, there was not a single traitor. The people of Dublin, accomplices of the conspiracy, were perfectly united in keeping the secret. A short time before the Insurrection, Lord Hardwicke, apprehending some movements in the County of Kildare, sent troops there to keep the people in awe; but his attention was not drawn to what was passing under his eyes in Dublin. Robert Emmet had with him about a dozen men, nearly all sprung from the ranks of the people, who called themselves his staff, and whose labours he directed, scarcely taking a few hours rest on a mattress, in the middle of the depot in Thomas Street. Ardent, yet master of himself, he animated them with his ardour, and mastered them by his coolness; his easy and popular eloquence made itself intelligible to every class of society. (43)

(43) Here is a fragment of some of the addresses made by Emmet to the conspirators. It consists of detached phrases which want connection, and which have evidently been written out from recollection by some of those who had been present. "Liberty is the daughter of oppression," said Emmet to us, in his brilliant language, "and tyranny, like the poetic bird of the desert, consumes

Madden succeeded in finding out one of these men, named James Hope, strolling in a retired part of the country, near Belfast. He was, then, a respectable old man, much esteemed by his neighbours for the firmness of his principles and the cordiality of his character, and ever faithful to the cause of his youth. He was self-taught, and was not

itself with its own fires. We have a striking example in the history of Ireland, whose intellect and power have increased in direct proportion with the effect made to keep her down. In this sense, one may sustain that apparent paradox, that the greatest evils of a nation become often the instrument of its salvation. The rights of man to liberty augment in direct proportion with his civilisation. Dykes may be opposed to a flood; but, if the heaped-up waters find no other issue, they will overwhelm the vain obstacles which a presumptuous master opposes to it. Our sufferings, whatever betide, cannot last much longer, for Nature revolts against tyranny, and the chains which bind us are tightened to the utmost: it needs but an effort of either the oppressor or the oppressed to break them, to restore Freedom to Ireland. Misery ought not to be endured patiently, except when no remedy can be applied to it. Samson, who turned the mill for his oppressors, buried them in the ruins of the temple when his strength was restored to him. If Ireland, in her weakness, has long borne the chains of slavery, it is no reason why she should continue under the yoke the day she shall be able shake it off. The Irish peasant begins to-day to know his state of degradation and to seek the cause of it; it has always been his inclination to reason upon politics, and, by force of thinking upon the subject, he has come to judge soundly upon it. He knows as well as any man in this country the object of every act of the Government which oppresses us, whether it be to enrich, at his expense, an extravagant lord, or to crush under the yoke an unfortunate people by a new Insurrection Act." Whilst Robert Emmet spoke thus, his fine face beamed on us with a noble ardour; he expressed himself with a graceful eloquence, and combined his arguments with all the ease of a man accustomed to abstract discussions.—*Rebellion Book; London and Dublin Magazine*, 1825,

altogether devoid of literary acquirements. Madden obtained from him some curious details concerning his intimacy with his former chief. Let him speak for himself here :—

“At my first interview with Mr. Emmet, on his arrival from France, he told me that ‘some of the first men of the land had invited him over ;’ he asked me my opinion, ‘was I for an appeal to arms ?’ I replied, ‘I was.’ After some further conversation, he said, ‘his plan was formed.’ On my second interview with Mr. Emmet, he told me he would require my constant assistance, and said that two stores were taken, and workmen had been selected.”

“In the several depôts there were no less, to my knowledge, than forty men employed, only three or four of whom became traitors, and that not till their own lives were in danger. The men behaved with the greatest prudence, none seeming to wish to know more than concerned their own department, each man’s duty was kept separate and secret from the other.” “At all times Mr. Emmet seemed cool, tranquil, and determined, even to the last moment of my seeing him, which was at seven o’clock on that evening of the 23d of July. He appeared to be confident of success ; he was never light or thoughtless in his manner, nor absent, nor agitated in mind. He talked familiarly with the men ; but still with something of seriousness, nothing of jocularly. The men never received any pay for their services ; they all acted for the cause, and not for money—their diet and lodging, and sometimes only the latter, was their sole remuneration. The people had great confidence in him ; they would venture their lives for him.” (44) “On making a remark to Mr. Emmet

(44) *Madden’s United Irishmen ; Memoir of Robert Emmet.*
This assertion seems hardly consistent with the one which precedes

respecting the defection of Colonel Plunkett, he said, 'there were many who professed to serve a cause with life and fortune, but if called on to redeem their pledge would contrive to do so with the lives and fortunes of others; for my part,' said he, 'my fortune is now committed, the promises of many whose fortunes are considerable are committed likewise, but their means have not been as yet forthcoming. If I am defeated by their conduct, the fault is not mine,' . . . &c. Hope says, remarks Dr. Madden, that the only two persons of distinction he saw at Emmet's were Mr. F——, the brother of the K—— of G——, and a nobleman, Lord W——, the son of a marquis, who subsequently, in the County of Meath, offered him, through his steward, the means of leaving the country, which Hope declined to accept. (45)

All was going on well, and the conspirators flattered themselves that they would carry out their enterprise, when a series of unfortunate circumstances occurred, which upset all their projects. In the middle of the month of July, an explosion took place in a depot of powder in Patrick Street; two men employed on the works perished; one of them expired in the arms of Robert Emmet, whose heart, it is said, was deeply distressed at the sufferings of his two companions. By the greatest chance, this time again, the police, who made a descent into the house, conceived only vague suspicions, the arms having been removed in time; they arrested the men found on the premises, however, and took them to prison. The next day, an Orange paper pro-

it. We retain it as we find it in the text: I have reproduced here the narrative of the old conspirator, without altering its simple originality.

(45) For Hope's narrative, see Madden's *United Irishmen*, 3d series, vol. 3, pp. 97-115, and note at page 102.

claimed to the Government that it was sleeping on a mine, and that from one day to the other this mine would explode. The danger was pressing ; the least delay might ruin all. It was no longer possible to wait for the landing of the French army, in the month of August ; it was necessary to act immediately, or to give up the enterprise altogether. Robert Emmet insisted on immediate action ; he urged that no more favourable circumstances would ever be found, that, in another month, perhaps, the Militia would be armed, the Government on the watch, and the country put into a state of defence. Others, on the contrary, considered the preparations insufficient, the chances of success doubtful, and, either from prudence or fear, withdrew at the hour of danger. Seven days were passed in these deliberations. The ascendancy which Robert Emmet had acquired over them at length brought over the majority, who declared that they were ready to follow their chief for life or death. They decided upon making one attempt to take the Castle. "That is the important point," said one of the conspirators ; "for, in the eyes of most men, the legitimate power is that which occupies the seat of Government." The die was cast ; arms were secretly distributed among the people. But disorder and division had entered into the ranks of the conspirators. From that day everything announced a failure ; and it is difficult at the last moment not to accuse the young conspirator of imprudence and precipitation. Confident in the justice of his cause, ardent, and inexperienced, he was wanting, on the day for execution, in the foresight and skill which he had displayed in the conception and the preparation of his projects.

A fragment of a journal, found in the dépôt in Thomas Street, and which became, at a later period, one of the documents of the trial, may give some idea of the state of

his mind during the days which preceded the fatal catastrophe :—"I have little time," said he, "to look at the thousand difficulties which still lie between me and the completion of my wishes. That those difficulties will likewise disappear I have ardent and, I trust, rational hopes ; but, if it is not to be the case, I thank God for having gifted me with a sanguine disposition," &c. (46)

It was on the 23d of July, in the evening, that the Insurrection of which Robert Emmet was one of the chiefs broke out in the streets of Dublin and in the market-place. One might have foreseen the premonitory signs of a storm in the profound silence which reigned in the streets on the eve of the Insurrection. The public-houses were empty, the villages in the environs were deserted. Who does not remember, in the days of our own civil wars, that silence which precedes great popular movements, as at sea, the whirlwinds and the tempests ? The following proclamation, intended to be placarded on the walls of Dublin, was found in the Dépôt at Marshalsea Lane :—

"THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.—You are now called upon to shew the world that you are competent to take your place among nations, that you have a right to claim their recognisance of you as an independent country, by the only satisfactory proof you can furnish of your capability of maintaining your independence—your wresting it from England with your own hands." "Religious disqualifications are but one of the many grievances of which Ireland has to complain. Our intention is to remove not that only, but every other oppression under which we labour. We fight that all of us may have our country, and, that done, each of us

shall have our religion." "We war not against property—we war against no religious sect—we war not against past opinions or prejudices—we war against English dominion," &c. And in the same place were found numerous printed copies of a second proclamation:—"Citizens of Dublin, we require your aid; necessary secrecy has prevented to many a knowledge of our plan, but the erection of the National standard, the sacred, though long degraded, green (47), will be found a sufficient call to arms, and rally round it every man in whose breast exists a spark of patriotism or sense of duty. Avail yourselves of local advantages; in a city each street becomes a defile, and each house a battery. Impede the march of your oppressors, charge them with the arms of the brave, the pike; and from your windows hurl stones, bricks, bottles, and all other convenient instruments on the heads of the satellites of your tyrant, the mercenary and sanguinary soldiery of England." "Countrymen, of all descriptions, let us act with union and concert; all sects, Catholic, Protestant, Presbyterian, are indiscriminately embraced in the benevolence of our object. Repress, prevent, and discourage excesses, pillage, and intoxication. Let each man do his duty, and remember that during public agitation inaction becomes a crime. Be no other competition known than that of doing good. Remember against whom you fight—your oppressors for six hundred years. Remember their massacres, their tortures; remember your murdered friends, your burned houses, your violated females. Keep in mind your country, to whom you are now giving her high rank among nations; and, in the

(47) The uniform and the flag adopted by the rebels in 1803, as in 1798, were green, the national colour of Ireland.

honest terror of feeling, let us all exclaim that, as in the hour of her trial we serve this country, so may God serve us in that which shall be our *last*." (48)

Respecting the various incidents of this unfortunate day the narrations do not agree with each other. Nothing seems more natural, when we know how the information given by those who have co-operated and assisted at the same events is often confused and contradictory. The men of Wicklow and Kildare, on whom reliance had been placed, did not come on the day appointed. The armed peasantry set forward to make a descent on the city, but, at the last moment, their leaders, deceived by a false alarm, failed to keep their appointments. At nine o'clock in the evening, Robert Emmet, dressed in the uniform of the Rebel army, with two pistols in his belt, was seen to come from Thomas Street, followed by about fifty men, and to advance in the direction of the Market-place. He was soon to know all the misfortunes of a chief condemned to lead to the combat a tumultuous and undisciplined army incapable of the bold *coup de main* which he expected them to perform. The people rushed with impetuosity into the streets of Dublin, giving way to no excess, but spreading terror on their way. All the houses were closed; the women and children fled with screams of terror; Malachy, Dowdall, Robert, and some of the chiefs of the Insurrection, were not able to lead to the attack of the Castle more than eighty men—a number which decreased every minute. Arrived on the spot, they were scarcely more than twenty. At this moment there appeared a body of police, commanded by

(48) See Madden's *United Irishmen*, 3d Series, vol. 3, Appendix, pp. 303, 307, 309, and 317. The second of these two proclamations does not appear to have been written by Emmet, but by Mr. Long.

Mr. Edward Wilson, the first who had the courage to face the people in rebellion. "Shall I fire," said Malachy, raising his gun. "Wait until we are attacked," answered Robert Emmet, turning the muzzle aside; "do not shed blood without necessity." (49) While this was going on, a report came that the coach of Lord Kilwarden, arriving from the country, was attacked at the entrance of the city by a band of insurgents, and that Lord Kilwarden had just been murdered. On hearing this Robert Emmet turned back in haste, but he arrived too late to prevent the murder. He, however, saved from the popular fury the daughter of Lord Kilwarden, who had fainted, and transported her, more dead than alive, into a neighbouring house. (50) When Lord Kilwarden fell into the hands of the insurgents he thought, with some appearance of reason (for his name was justly popular in Dublin), that he should save his life in making himself known. Stretching forward from the coach

(49) Maxwell's *History of the Irish Rebellion*.

(50) The murder of Lord Kilwarden is attributed to private revenge. In 1798, unhappy children, of fifteen or sixteen years of age, had been brought into court and accused of high treason. The day of their trial they appeared before the bench with bare necks and short collars, after the fashion for children. "Well, Mr. Attorney-General, what are we going to do with all those traitors in short collars?" said the Chief-Justice entering on business. And he spoke of hanging them all at once. The Attorney-General, more humane, made the remark that their youth rendered them, perhaps, worthy of pardon. The decision was, that they should be transported. One alone of them refused to accept such pardon, and was hanged. [This anecdote is told of the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; and it is supposed that Lord Kilwarden, Chief-Justice of the King's Bench, was confounded with his colleague by the mob to whom he named himself the Lord Chief Justice.]

door he said, in a loud voice, "What do you want with me? I am Lord Kilwarden, the Chief-Justice." At the word Chief-Justice one of the insurgents imagined he recognised in Lord Kilwarden the author of the death of an unfortunate boy, a relation of his family. "If you are the Chief-Justice this is what you deserve," cried he, and with a thrust of his pike struck him down in the coach. Thus one crime draws on another, and the innocent perishes in the place of the guilty on the day of retaliation. Lord Kilwarden, murdered in the Insurrection of Dublin, was precisely the mildest and most upright of the magistrates of Ireland. His life during the stormy times he had passed through had been but one continual protest in favour of justice and humanity. Taken away, covered with wounds and in a dying state, to a neighbouring guard-house, where he heard on every side the imprecations of the English soldiers against the insurgents, Lord Kilwarden raised himself up a moment, and, in a faint voice, uttered, before expiring, these admirable words, "Let no one perish on account of my death except by the ordinary course of the law"—"words which," says Phillips, "ought to have been engraven in letters of gold on his tomb."

From that moment Robert Emmet absolutely despaired of the success of the day. "Fortune, from the outset," says Lord Cloncurry, "was against him, but discouragement and fear were foreign to his nature." It was only then that he was observed to falter and hesitate in his resolution. The murder of Lord Kilwarden penetrated him with horror and anguish. (51) Of the qualities necessary

(51) It must be said, to the honour of the insurgents of 1803, that Robert Emmet was not the only one of them whom the murder of Lord Kilwarden inspired with just horror. "Had I been near Lord Kilwarden," said a man of the people, at his own

for a conspirator,—for the leader of an insurrection,—Robert had, indeed, the boldness and spirit of enterprise, but not the determination to attain his ends by any and every means. He was seized with indignation and disgust towards the people, whom he could not induce to attack the Castle, and who thus abandoned themselves to acts of cowardly ferocity. It was, it may be affirmed, the murder of Lord Kilwarden which saved the city and decided the fate of the day. During the time that passed the alarm was given, the Castle doors closed, regiments of cavalry and infantry drawn out, and all the advantage of a surprise was lost. In two hours the English troops had swept away the rebels. The chiefs of the Insurrection, however, made a last effort to rally the people, who fled with precipitation before the red-coats, and to bring them back to the combat. They managed to get possession for awhile of the Mansion-house and of a post commanded by Lieutenant Douglas. Colonel Brown was killed, after a very sharp assault. The ardour of the combatants was proved by the number of dead and wounded, on both sides, left on the spot. An affecting circumstance signalised that skirmish. It was that of a father who threw himself before his son, covering him with his body from the fury of the soldiers, and fell, pierced with bayonets. The young man avenged his father's death on the soldier who had just killed him by laying him dead at his feet. But soon, in spite of the desperate efforts of Emmet and his companions, the rout was general on all points.

trial, "I would have saved his life at the expense of my own." James Hope says that this murder was the work of traitors mingled in the ranks of the insurgents for the purpose of dishonouring the cause by their excesses. The version which I have given however, passes for the true one,

Under cover of the night Emmet retreated with the insurgents. The first house outside the city, where, on that fatal night, he sought for refuge, along with Malachy, Dowdall, and some others, was that of Anne Devlin. She was a woman of twenty-five or twenty-six years of age, employed, as we have already said, in his service, and niece to Michael Dwyer, one of the boldest rebels of 1798. A little farther on will be seen how great was the heroic devotedness of this poor woman for her master ; but at this moment, with the instinct of the children of the people, who always take the part of their own class against the classes above them — “Unhappy man !” she exclaimed, “you excite the people to revolt, and you abandon them.” “Do not reproach me, my good friend,” answered Robert Emmet ; “if we have done nothing it is their fault and not mine.”

At daybreak they succeeded in getting horses ; the conspirators dispersed, and the greater number took refuge in the Wicklow Mountains. There they found the peasants and the inhabitants of the mountains under arms, and quite ready for the Insurrection. That very evening the chiefs of the conspiracy, having arrived from Dublin by various routes, assembled in a field situated in the midst of the mountains, and deliberated on their plan of operations. All advised the boldest measures. They should, on the next day, attack the towns of Wicklow, Arklow, &c., &c. Ireland was on fire—at the first signal the entire country would rise. But the time for illusions was past for Robert Emmet. He listened to his friends in silence ; and he did not hesitate to condemn, absolutely, all continuation of hostilities. “Our first attempt having failed,” said he to them, “every new effort, on our part, would henceforth be useless. Our foes are armed—our friends discouraged—

our only hope is in the future—let us await it with patience. Our cause is just : and justice will triumph sooner or later. Let us not compromise it by rash undertakings. No doubt we might, in forty-eight hours, kindle the flames of rebellion all over Ireland ; but what is our object ? To free our country. I believe I serve her interests better in refusing to raise my name on the ruins of thousands of our fellow-countrymen, thus to give tyrants a pretext for adding yet more to the weight of our chains. Should the voice of calumny, in future times, make my memory responsible for the blood shed last night, some one, I hope, will be found to remember that it was in my power to change that revolt of a day into a rebellion, and that I refused to do so. In insurrections all depends upon the first blow ; and we have missed. Our plan was an excellent one ; it failed, owing to circumstances beyond our control, and impossible to foresee. We have now but to hide our retreat. The most profound secrecy has presided at all our plans and our acts ; our losses are inconsiderable ; let us allow the Government to relapse into false security, unacquainted with the danger that threatened it, and the extent of our resources ; some day or the other, and perhaps sooner than we imagine, it will give us an opportunity of attacking it with more success. Our enterprise will not have been useless, if it has only proved to us that thousands of men may be in possession of so important a secret, without one traitor being found among them. Let me recommend you, my friends, to act in this emergency with that prudence which is requisite in men devoted to the greatest of causes—the deliverance of their country. Be circumspect, be silent, and give no grounds for suspicion to your foes. Over my future fate has thrown the impenetrable veil which mortal eye cannot see through. Should I succeed in evading the pursuit of my enemies, be

assured that you shall see me again, one day, in arms for the cause of Ireland. While there is a Robert Emmet in existence the Government will not be in safety in this country. But if it be my fate to die on the scaffold do not be daunted by my example. Let not cowards prevent you from appealing to arms, again and again, until the day when you shall have reconquered your rights and the independence of your country. Remember, yourselves, and make your children remember, that, had fate been favourable to me, if I had only a few thousand men and a few days before me, I should have overturned the foundations of despotism, and given freedom to Ireland. Let us now part, gentlemen, and let each look to his own safety. I shall do the best I can to quit the country, in the hope of again meeting you under happier auspices." (52)

In speaking thus the voice of Emmet faltered, and when he bade farewell to his companions he was deeply affected. A solemn silence ensued ; the faces of all grew pale, tears fell from the eyes of many present ; discouragement and anxiety about the future followed the excitement of the first moment. After some hesitation they concluded by adopting his advice, and, by degrees, two and three at a time, the meeting began to disperse. In a private letter, which was read at his trial, Robert shews himself still more discouraged regarding not only the present but the future of his country. He is in despair, wrote Dowdall, and says nothing can be done for this people ; they must only bear their slavery, since they are incapable and unworthy of being delivered from it. He was persuaded of this by the late affair, which would certainly have succeeded but for their

(52) See "*Rebellion Book, and Black History ; Robert Emmet and his Contemporaries.*"

cowardly desertion. Nothing was easier than to take possession of the Castle if they had only a little courage and determination. I believe it readily, for Robert is as brave as Cæsar, and, certainly, if anything had been possible, he would have achieved it.

At the moment of separation they surrounded Emmet, and pressed him warmly to make his escape before the police had set out in his pursuit and had discovered his retreat. A rare opportunity just then presented itself. Some fishing smacks, which belonged to the insurgents, might, in a few hours, carry them free from the coast. Robert excused himself with some embarrassment, and said that it was absolutely necessary for him, before leaving Ireland, to return for some days to Dublin. They all exclaimed at once that to return to Dublin, where, probably, a price was now set upon his head, was the extreme of imprudence. Pressed with questions, Robert at last avowed that he wanted to see in Dublin a person who was dear to him, whom he had involuntarily wronged, and whose pardon he wished to obtain before bidding her, perhaps, an eternal adieu. Remonstrances, prayers—all were useless. “He could not leave Ireland, for years, perhaps for ever, without seeing her. Were he to face a thousand deaths he would see her. He was resolved to see her again.”

“It was on that very romantic business,” says one of his friends, with natural irritation, “that Emmet returned to Dublin at the peril of his life.” It is probable that it was not love alone that brought him back to Dublin; all his conduct proves that he considered himself bound in honour not to abandon those whom he had compromised in his rash enterprise, only to think of his own personal safety. He established himself at Harold’s Cross, in the house of a Mrs. Palmer, on the road leading to the country-house

in which Miss Curran resided. Did he succeed in obtaining an interview with her? This has never been clearly ascertained. It is certain that he wrote to her several times. Some writers, indeed, pretend that he was concealed in a summer-house in the garden, and that she whom he loved used to bring him food at night, unknown to her family; but this romantic story seems to be quite improbable.

Some days after the Insurrection, Anne Devlin had been arrested: her house was taken possession of by the soldiers, who ravaged it from top to bottom, and ended by setting fire to it. In order to obtain from her some information concerning the place where her master was hidden they offered her at first a large sum of money. But she exclaimed, with a look of indignation and contempt, "*I accept the price of Master Robert's blood!*" They then put her to the torture, called, at the time, "picketting" and "half hanging." Pierced with bayonet wounds, and bathed in her blood, this heroic woman repeated continually "I have nothing to say. I will say nothing." They then put the cord round her neck. "Will you say where Mr. Emmet is?"—"You may kill me, but I will say nothing." She had scarcely time to add "Lord Jesus have mercy on my soul!" when she was hung up, amidst the shouts and savage joy of her executioners. They cut her down when she had lost consciousness, and carried her, quite insensible, to prison. There she passed several years, and the effect of the tortures she had suffered was such that when she at length came out it was as a cripple for the rest of her days. Madden succeeded in discovering her forty years after, very old and very poor, earning her bread with great difficulty in a distant part of the country. He brought her with him to Butterfield Lane, to the house in which she had lived with

Robert Emmet and his companions, (53) and there it was a curious and touching spectacle to see her recollection come back, little by little, as from a dream. "It was here that Mr. Hamilton and Mr. Dowdall lodged; there was my room;" and then, after a moment's silence, her hands trembling, tears rolling down her wrinkled cheeks, and with a voice thrilling with all her former affection—"There it was," said she, "that Master Robert slept." (54.)

When the news of the Insurrection in Dublin reached England a very animated scene took place in the Parliament. The Lord Lieutenant and his Administration were loaded with reproaches; they were accused of apathy and incapacity. Lord Castlereagh, Sir William Elliot, Mr. Windham, Mr. Fox, Colonel Crawford, Sir John Wrottesley, spoke in succession, attacking or defending the Government. Sir John Wrottesley went so far as to propose that the Lord Lieutenant should be impeached. It could not be denied that a dangerous conspiracy had been carried on, as it were, under his very eyes, and that he never suspected anything about it. Mr. Sheridan answered that it was of the greatest importance not to admit that the capital of Ireland had been on the point of falling into the hands of rebels; it would be giving encouragement to rebellion and treason all over the kingdom. Lord Castlereagh affirmed that the danger had been greatly exaggerated. It was false, he said, that the Government was unprepared

(53) Anne Devlin had lived at Butterfield Lane, in the house of Mrs. Palmer, along with Robert Emmet and his friends.

(54) In order to punish this poor woman for her devotion to her master, she was brought, by express orders, to the place where he had just been executed, and they shewed her his blood, which was yet flowing, the dogs licking it up at the foot of the scaffold.

when the Insurrection broke out. He asked for permission to contradict that assertion in the most formal terms. The Lord Lieutenant had been informed several days before of this atrocious conspiracy, and had taken his measures in consequence.

Lord Castlereagh, without being called upon, took this opportunity of defending the Government during the Rebellion in 1798. Never had such a rebellion been put down so promptly, and with so little severity ! The Minister brought in the next day two bills, which were immediately voted—one, to suspend the *Habeas Corpus*, which, to say to the truth, never had been in Ireland other than a pure fiction ; the other, to proclaim martial law throughout the whole country. A price was put upon the heads of the chiefs of the Insurrection, and a reward was offered for the discovery of the murderers of Lord Kilwarden. (55)

In spite of the efforts of the conspirators to stop the Insurrection, some partial disturbances broke out in certain quarters. Immediately courts-martial commenced their functions, prisons were filled (56), executions succeeded with rapidity ; innocent and guilty—all who appeared before these courts of savage justice—were alike condemned. The greatest evil of an unsuccessful Insurrection in our country, says Grattan, lies in the ferocious terror and legal butchery it authorises. While Emmet was concealed he conceived the strange idea, which, however, he did not put into execution, of addressing an anonymous letter to the Government, in order to make it suspend its rigorous measures. A fragment of this unfinished letter was read

(55) See *Parliamentary Debates*, July, 1803.

(56) Messrs. Philip Long, John Hickson, St. John Mason, John Hevey, Nicholas Grey, James Tandy, Henry Hughes, William Hamilton, John Palmer, &c., were arrested, as having participated in the conspiracy, and were shut up in Kilmainham Jail.

on his trial. "Of the present conspiracy," he said, "the Government must acknowledge it knows nothing, or almost nothing. If it does not terrify by the extent of its discoveries, does it then hope at least to frighten by the severity of its punishment? Is it to-day only that the man who conspires against the English Government knows that he risks his life? Examples of this kind are not wanting to warn him, and if these examples have not been sufficient, if the refinement in torture and multitude of victims have failed in striking terror into the Irish, what can be the intention of this Government? To immolate some few weak, obscure, and isolated individuals is to cut only some threads of a vast conspiracy which, until this day, has remained impenetrable to their eyes. The United Irishmen are determined upon delivering their country sooner or later. They will await the favourable opportunity——" [Here the letter breaks off.]

Robert, at this time, might still have escaped, but a repugnance to leave the place near which Miss Curran lived, —perhaps, also, the secret hope of re-commencing, sooner or later, a more successful attempt,—kept him, unfortunately, in the country. In fact, no man is ever a day older than his age, and it may be that a certain love of adventure made him feel a charm in a life full of perils. Major Sirr, who had already discovered and arrested Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was put in pursuit of Robert Emmet. (57) He first went into Butterfield Lane. "The nest is here," said he, on going into Emmet's room, "but the bird is flown." Three days after the house of Mrs. Palmer was surrounded by the police. When the Major entered the house, followed by his officers, the granddaughter of Mrs.

(57) Dr. Elrington, Provost of Trinity College, had furnished Major Sirr with an exact description of the person of Emmet, which enabled the Major to recognise him!

Palmer ran to warn Robert, who was at dinner. He attempted to escape by a back door opening on the garden and the country. By order of the Major, however, who, from the window, saw him escaping, the sentinel on guard ran after him, overtook him, and wounded him in the shoulder with a pistol shot. Emmet then gave himself up, and gave his name as Cunningham. His uniform was on his bed; on a chair at his bedside was the unfinished letter. The Major went up to the prisoner, who was occupied in staunching the blood from his wound, and excused himself for the rudeness with which he had been obliged to treat him. Robert answered him that "all was fair in war." A few moments after he walked through the crowd surrounding the house, followed by the Major and his attendants, betraying, says a person who was present, neither fear nor agitation, but that calm and dignified demeanour which at all times characterised that truly extraordinary young man. He was taken to the Castle, where, being recognised by one of his former college companions, he no longer sought to conceal his name. The first person who perceived him as he entered into the prison yard was Anne Devlin. "I almost fell to the ground when I saw him," she says; "he passed close to me, walking very quickly, and marching up and down in the yard, as if he had never seen me before; but the expression of his face being well known to me I perceived, by a slight smile, that he had recognised me."

Some days after he was arrested Robert Emmet wrote to Miss Curran. In that letter he spoke of politics as well as of love, and told her, in taking a retrospective view of his whole conduct, that he only reproached himself with one thing, and that was, of being wanting in prudence. He attributed the failure of the Insurrection partly to the

moderation of Lord Hardwicke's Administration, which he called a perfidious "moderation." The jailor to whom he gave the letter, and who promised, for a considerable sum of money, to have it taken to its address, took it immediately to the Attorney-General. When he learned what had happened, Robert trembled at having compromised the person he loved. Knowing that they feared the effects of his eloquence at his trial and on the scaffold, he wrote immediately to the Privy Council. He had wronged, he said, an innocent girl; if they promised not to give any trouble to the family he would consent to plead guilty, and to suffer himself to be led to the scaffold without saying a single word in his defence; but, if they refused, he was resolved, on the contrary, to address the people, and to use every means of action in his power with the greatest determination. (58)

The next day Curran's house was visited, on a warrant issued by the Attorney-General, and the report was circulated that the celebrated lawyer was compromised in the conspiracy. In his daughter's apartment letters from Robert Emmet were found, and it was by that legal procedure, says Mr. W. H. Curran, that the father learned the fatal attachment in which one of his children was engaged. Curran was deeply irritated at the discovery of a connexion which he had not authorised. He was a man of a stern and imperious nature. The false position in which the discovery placed him as a public character, the suspicions it gave rise to, the obligations that it imposed upon him of appearing before the Privy Council, and of descending even

(58) There were fine traits in the life of Emmet. Amongst others, when he offered to plead guilty, in order not to compromise a young girl whom he loved; that certainly was a noble action.—*Grattan's Life and Times.*

to justify himself, all contributed to aggravate his resentment. The unfortunate Sarah was exiled from the paternal roof, in spite of the supplications of the Attorney-General, Mr. Standish O'Grady, who, far from shewing severity to the father, interceded in favour of the daughter.

Some time before the trial of Robert Emmet, the Attorney-General, in the exercise of his functions, was obliged to have an interview with Miss Curran, but he treated her, says her brother, with so much mildness and indulgence that this official visit was changed into a visit of condolence. He left the poor girl deeply grateful, and feeling that he had treated her with the tenderness of a parent. It was then that Robert Emmet wrote to Curran, in the hope of making him act with less severity to his daughter, by laying, with a most natural sentiment of delicacy, all the blame upon himself. As it will be seen, he did not tell him anything like the whole truth. He endeavoured, above all, to hide from an irritated father the ardour and depth of the passion of his daughter—he attributed to a connexion already of long standing a recent and accidental origin, and as pity, joined to admiration, is, of all dangers, the greatest for the heart of a woman, it was, he affirmed, on the day she saw him so unhappy that she betrayed the secret of her affections—

“She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her, that she did pity them.”

“There was a time,” says Mr. W. H. Curran, “when the publication of these letters might have been painful, but that time is past. The only persons to whom they could have caused sorrow—the father and the child—are no more. He who survives, and who now, from a feeling of duty, reveals them to the public, has the profound conviction

that they cannot lessen the feelings of tenderness and esteem accorded to their memory by those who knew them” :—

FROM MR. ROBERT EMMET TO JOHN PHILPOT CURRAN, ESQ.

“I did not expect you to be my counsel. I nominated you because not to have done so might have appeared remarkable. I know that I have done you very severe injury, much greater than I can atone for with my life ; that atonement I did offer to make before the privy council, by pleading guilty, if those documents were suppressed. I would only require for my part of it the suppression of those documents, and that I would abide the event of my own trial. This was also rejected ; and nothing but individual information would be taken. My intention was, not to leave the suppression of those documents to possibility, but to render it unnecessary for any one to plead for me, by pleading guilty to the charge myself.

“The circumstance that I am now going to mention I do not state in my own justification. When I first addressed your daughter, I expected that in a short time my own fate would be decided. I spoke to your daughter, neither expecting, nor, in fact, under those circumstances, wishing, that there should be a return of attachment ; but wishing to judge of her dispositions, to know how far they might be not unfavourable or disengaged, and to know what foundation I might afterwards have to count on. I received no encouragement whatever. She told me she had no attachment for any person, nor did she seem likely to have any that could make her wish to quit you. I stayed away till the time had elapsed, when I found that the event to which I allude was to be postponed indefinitely. I returned by a kind of infatuation, thinking that to myself only was I giving pleasure or pain. I perceived no pro-

gress of attachment on her part, nor anything in her conduct to distinguish me from a common acquaintance. Afterwards I had reason to suppose that discoveries were made, and that I should be obliged to quit the kingdom immediately ; and I came to make a renunciation of any approach to friendship that might have been formed. On that very day, she herself spoke to me to discontinue my visits ; I told her that it was my intention, and I mentioned the reason. I then, for the first time, found, when I was unfortunate, by the manner in which she was affected, that there was a return of affection, and that it was too late to retreat. My own apprehensions, also, I afterwards found were without cause, and I remained. There has been much culpability on my part in all this, but there has also been a great deal of that misfortune which seems uniformly to have accompanied me. That I have written to your daughter, since an unfortunate event has taken place, was an additional breach of propriety, for which I have suffered well ; but I will candidly confess, that I not only do not feel it to have been of the same extent, but that I consider it to have been unavoidable after what had passed ; for though I will not attempt to justify it in the smallest degree, my former conduct, yet, when an attachment was once formed between us—and a sincerer one never did exist—I feel that, peculiarly circumstanced as I then was, to have left her uncertain of my situation would neither have weaned her affections nor lessened her anxiety ; and looking upon her as one whom, if I had lived, I hoped to have made my partner for life, I did hold the removing her anxiety above every other consideration. I would rather have had the affections of your daughter in the back settlements of America than the first situation this country could afford without them. I know not whether this will be any extenuation of my

offence—I know not whether it will be any extenuation of it to know, that if I had that situation in my power at this moment I would relinquish it to devote my life to her happiness—I know not whether success would have blotted out the recollection of what I had done—but I know that a man, with the coldness of death on him, need not be made to feel any other coldness, and that he may be spared any addition to the misery he feels, not for himself, but for those to whom he has left nothing but sorrow.”

It may be remarked how far love changes the character; it would be difficult to recognise in the painful timidity, in the humility of this language, the man whose proud and energetic defence we shall record at a later period. He must have blushed while writing it, and the sad and timid allusion to the destiny that awaited him is particularly heart-rending. Surely, surely, so much simplicity, so much tenderness of soul, ought to have moved the most implacable of men. This letter, so noble and so touching, did not, however, succeed in disarming the resentment of Curran ; it is certain that he did not see Robert Emmet again, and what is more singular, it does not appear that he made any effort to save his life. Had he done so, surely his son, so anxious to inform the public of everything that could honour the memory of his father, would not have failed to inform us of it. Having to plead for one of the rebels, he hastened to avail himself of that opportunity of condemning the Insurrection in harsh and contemptuous terms, and of exculpating himself from all suspicion. Those who are most severe on that unfortunate attempt are precisely Curran in his speech, and Grattan’s son in his Memoirs ; so true it is, that, in case of failure, it is better to be judged by one’s enemies than by one’s friends. The former have no fear of seeing their personal position compromised by the

defeat, and the very party most anxious to separate itself from the vanquished would have been, by its intermediate position, the first to rally round their standard, if victorious. This is one of the sad spectacles which human nature offers, seen in the dim gloom of adversity.

In the meantime, the trials before the courts-martial and the executions proceeded without interruption. Among the insurgents, some died with firmness, and remained to the last faithful to their cause ; others exhibited signs of repentance ; others protested their innocence, and maintained that they were condemned for things of which they had not the slightest knowledge. A young man, of respectable family, named Felix Rourke, was, by a refinement of cruelty, hung before his father's house. But public attention was particularly fixed on the trial of Robert Emmet. His youth, his talents, his character, his position in the world, everything in him, excited interest and curiosity. He was, however, in no way deceived about the fate that awaited him, and he contemplated it with a firmness of which we can judge by the following facts :—Some days before his trial, the governor of the prison, taking his rounds, entered suddenly into his room, and, finding him absorbed in his reflections, and with a peculiar expression of countenance, excused himself for disturbing him. There was on the little table, on which they placed his meals, a lock of hair, half-plaited, fixed with a long pin. “ You may see,” said Robert to him, “ whether my time is innocently employed ; this is the hair of one who is dear to me, and I am busy in plaiting it, that I may wear it on the day of my execution.” (59) The

(59) Fate often seems to sport with whatever is most touching and most sacred to the feelings. The clothes which Robert Emmet wore that day were, after his death, collected by the pious cares of a friend. That friend, it seems, made no disposition regarding

day of his death a drawing was found on his table, executed with the pen, and admirably done ; it was his own portrait, and a striking likeness—the head severed from the body, which lay beside it, together with the scaffold, the axe, and all the frightful apparatus of executions for high treason. (60)

It is affirmed that, some days before the trial, Miss Curran succeeded in obtaining a last interview with the man she loved, and who was on the eve of dying by the hands of the executioner. Robert Emmet was leaning against the bars of his prison window, plunged in a sad reverie, when, on turning, he saw Miss Curran standing motionless at the door. He did not appear surprised. He folded her in his arms, and pressed her to his heart, without uttering a word. The tone of his voice alone betrayed his emotion when he asked her not to forget him, and to remember him with affection when she should visit again the places that had witnessed their first happiness, where their youthful days had glided by. He begged of her, above all, never, in her presence, to let the world pronounce his name with levity or contempt. (61) There was more of tenderness and protection than of passion in his manner. Unwilling to prolong the heart-rending anguish of a last farewell, he led the unhappy girl, silent and trembling,

them before his death, and it is certain that, some years afterwards, the coat on which one could still see the tress of Miss Curran's black hair was offered to the curiosity of virtuosi at a public sale.

(60) "In truth," says Phillips, who reports these anecdotes, "he was not a young man whom adversity could shake or strike down."—Phillips: *Recollections of Curran*.

(61) Miss Curran was admitted to the prison by the jailor who, since, has reported that scene.—*Rebellion Book, and Black History: Robert Emmet and his Contemporaries*.

without resistance, to the door. At the moment of parting her eyes were fixed on him with a look in which all the anguish of her soul was expressed. The door closed, and they separated, never to meet again.

An article in the *Times*, in December, 1841, entitled "Robert Emmet and the Jailor of Kilmainham," informs us that a plan of attack to ensure the escape of Emmet, "that ill-fated but deeply-interesting young man," was projected in the interval between his arrest and his trial. It was intended to send him to America. A sum of £1,000 was to be given to the jailor of the prison, George Dunn, through the means of Dr. Trevor, whom Madden calls the Inquisitor of Kilmainham, for which he promised to favour, by every means possible, the escape of the prisoner. As soon as the money was received the Doctor revealed all to the police. In an anonymous letter, called forth by that article, and signed "Verax," a correspondent of the *Times* boasted of having contributed as much as lay in his power to the escape of Robert Emmet. (62)

At last came the great day expected with so much

(62) "He who writes this letter," says the anonymous correspondent, "knew all the danger and difficulty of the enterprise. He knew that he thereby himself ran great risk of being compromised in a case of high treason; he acknowledges his legal crime; but, as respects his moral crime, he avows that he experiences small repentance; he has but one regret, that of having failed in the enterprise. Robert Emmet had a grand and noble heart; it partook of those superior talents which have rendered the name of Emmet immortal. But, what is beyond all other considerations, he was then upon the brink of the tomb, the hand of death was already stretched over him. And who is the man, with a heart, who, in such circumstances, would not have acted like me? If he who writes the letter is a criminal, he prides himself in being so, along with Wilson and with Hutchinson."

anxiety by the public. Robert Emmet, on the 15th of September, appeared before a special commission, presided over by Lord Norbury, Baron George, and Baron Daly, Judges ; Mr. Standish O'Grady and Mr. Plunket, Attorney-General and Solicitor-General. Mr. Burrowes and Mr. MacNally were assigned as counsel for the prisoner. To understand the position of the parties, it is necessary to know that Lord Norbury was rendered infamous by the cruelty of his conduct in 1798. He was surnamed the *Hanging Judge*, and it was generally known that no accused man escaped alive out of his hands. Under the name of Mr. Toler, he had persecuted the children of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and demanded that their property should be confiscated, as it would have been by law had their father, who died in prison, suffered capitally. Mr. Plunket, since Lord Plunket, was an eminent orator of the patriotic opposition in the former Irish Parliament. His vigorous and penetrating eloquence gave him a singular power over his audience. He had been the friend in youth of Thomas Addis Emmet, although he did not sympathise with all his opinions. In the debates of the Act of the Union he did not fear to declare in the House that resistance, thenceforward, became a duty, and that Insurrection was no longer for Ireland a question of right, but one of prudence. "For my part," said he, "I will resist to my last breath, to the last drop of my blood, and, when I feel the hour of death approaching, I will lead my children, as did the father of Hannibal, to the foot of the altar, and make them swear eternal war to the enemies of the liberty of my country. I forbid you to attack the Constitution, and, if you do it, I declare that no man in Ireland shall be bound to obey you." Three years were sufficient to calm down the indignation of Mr. Plunket, who, after

that short delay, became Solicitor-General. Having forgotten his eloquent invectives, or, perhaps, wishing that they should be forgotten, he prosecuted the unfortunate young man who had the misfortune to take his words as serious, with a vehemence and severity revolting to the audience. (63) Madden takes a malicious pleasure in con-

63) Some years later, Lord Plunket brought an action at law against the author of a book, entitled *Sketches of History, Politics, and Manners in Ireland*, which bitterly reproached him with his conduct in the trial of Emmet. The author expressed himself in these terms:—"The Attorneys-General have at all times been of the race of hounds; rarely do they abandon their prey from considerations of gratitude or humanity. We have an instance in the trial of Lord Essex, where the celebrated Chancellor Bacon prosecuted his benefactor and friend. Mr. Plunket, Attorney-General of Ireland, is an orator eminent at the bar and in Parliament; nevertheless his conduct, seven years ago, at the trial of Mr. Emmet for high treason, has excited public reprobation. The vehemence and the rancour with which he pursued that unfortunate young man astonished and scandalised those who knew the obligations he was under to the father and the family of Robert Emmet. The public have never learned the reason for his conduct, which has greatly injured him in the esteem of honourable people."

A degree of embarrassment is perceptible in the justification made by Lord Plunket. He had no difficulty in proving that he had never received personal services from Emmet's father, as was pretended, and that he was scarcely acquainted with him. But it remains not the less averred that he had been the friend in childhood of Thomas Addis Emmet. "Mr. Plunket," says Mc'Nevin in *Pieces of Irish History*, "had been the intimate friend of Emmet, the companion of his childhood and youth."

Mr. Cobbett was accustomed in the English Parliament to call Lord Plunket, "The Father of the Hannibals," in recollection of that famous speech of his against the Union, which was followed so soon by such a conversion.

trasting the passages in Mr. Plunket's speech which condemn the Insurrection of 1803 and those in which he had himself excited to Insurrection. These sorts of conversions are not peculiar to Ireland ; examples of them may be found in other times and in other countries.

When Robert Emmet left the prison to go to the court-house he exchanged a few words at the grating with Mr. St. John Mason, his cousin, himself a prisoner at Kilmainham. In answer to some observations made by Mr. Mason, he was heard to pronounce these last words, "In partem utramque paratus." He was dressed entirely in black. He wore a black velvet stock, and top boots, of the form then called Hessian boots.

V.

It was at ten o'clock in the morning that the trial began. The crowd was immense. The soldiery, according to the orders given them, had taken possession of the interior of the court-house. Nothing could be discerned at a distance but uniforms, and the real public were pressing at the door for admittance. On sitting down at the bar, Robert Emmet touched the shoulder of Mr. Burrowes, whom he had chosen for his counsel, and said—"My friend, you shall not defend me. I know your talent and your courage, but you shall exercise neither to-day in my behalf." The trial began by the reading of the indictment against Robert Emmet, Esq., subject of our lawful Lord and King, who, not having the fear of God in his heart, but being moved by the instigation of the devil, has traitorously conspired against his lawful Sovereign, to whom he owes, like every loyal subject, love and obedience, and has troubled the peace of the realm, &c., &c. After the reading of the indictment the prisoner was asked—Guilty, or not guilty? Robert Emmet answered, in a firm voice, "Not guilty." Mr. Standish O'Grady then began his speech. His statement was long, calm, uncoloured, and uninteresting, but grave and decorous. In his language can easily be discerned the accents of an honest man convinced of the truth of what he advanced. The partiality of his point of view and the severity of his language are stamped with such good faith that they do not take from the respect due to an officer of justice. After a long and emphatic eulogium on the English Government, and the bene-

fits of its Administration in Ireland, he gave a succinct account of the last Insurrection, describing it as despicable in its insignificance, although atrocious in its results, originating in a conspiracy as odious as it was ridiculous. He reduced the enterprise to the most miserable proportions, and even went so far as to say that the pleasure of putting on the uniform of the rebellious army had, no doubt, a share in the enterprise of so young a man. This conspiracy, however, had only served to make more evident the love of the Irish people for their legitimate King. We have not before us at the bar to-day, gentlemen, a man carried away and seduced by others, but a gentleman whom we may consider as the author, the life and soul of the Rebellion. His correspondence with France, and his intention of introducing foreigners into the heart of his country, cannot be doubted. At this part of his discourse he drew a gloomy picture of the French Revolution, the scourge of the world and of civilised society. Then, reading the unfinished letter found in Emmet's room the day of his arrest, the Attorney-General paused at this sentence, "Who is he that conspires in Ireland against the British Government and does not know that he stakes his life?" One would be, in truth, inclined to think, so ready are certain individuals to enter into conspiracies, that this salutary lesson was not sufficiently impressed upon their minds. I should wish that every man who enters upon these treasonable practices would seriously ask himself if he is decided to incur the loss of his life and of his fortune and the blame of the world. If those who have appeared before the tribunals have been, until now, only obscure individuals, isolated, and of little importance, I am as sincerely sorry for that as the prisoner can be; but I hope that our commission will not close without having offered to the world

some examples of its justice, chosen on the higher ranks of society. It is, assuredly, much more important to strike the chiefs of the conspiracy than their instruments; but, in truth, it is absolutely necessary to strike both. For, if it is true that there would be no rebellion without conspirators, it is equally certain that there would be no conspirators if there were no instruments to serve their ambition. It is for this reason that examples of severe justice are necessary in the low as well as in the high classes of society. But I know that these criminals mount the scaffold under very different sentiments. He who has compromised the lives of others is doubly guilty, and will have to render a heavy account to God on the great day of retribution." The Attorney-General ended his speech by recommending the jury not to let themselves be turned from doing their duty by a culpable feeling of pity, to forget all they might have heard of the prisoner before his trial, and not to take into consideration his reputation and his past conduct. The object of that recommendation, which is generally made in favour of the prisoner, is evident: Emmet's conduct and reputation pleaded but too powerfully in his favour.

Then came the evidence of the witnesses, which related to the circumstances of the Insurrection. John Fleming, a native of Kildare, deposed that, at nine o'clock in the evening, he had seen the prisoner, with two pistols in his belt, marching down Thomas Street, followed by fifty men, to whom he said, "Come on, boys," and advanced in the direction of the Corn Market. The insurgents obeyed him, and seemed to look on him as their chief. Patrick Farrell deposed that he had fallen in with a party of insurgents, who wanted to shoot him, that Robert Emmet interposed, and saved his life. Edward Wilson, George Tyrrell,

Michael Frayne, Terence Colgan, Robert Lindsay, Captain Henry Evelyn, John Dyle, &c., successively gave their evidence. The last deposition was that of Major Sirr, who related the different circumstances of the arrest. All this time Robert Emmet had remained in deep silence. When the papers found in the depot in Thomas Street were handed in to the court he only asked through his lawyer, that the whole paragraph following, taken from the manifesto of the Provisional Government, should be read aloud :—

“Henceforward the use of torture and the whip shall be prohibited in Ireland, and shall not, under any pretext, be inflicted on any individual whatever.”

The list of witnesses being exhausted, Mr. MacNally, Robert Emmet's counsel, declared that, the prisoner not having produced any witnesses in his favour, not making any observations on the preceding evidence, and not having the intention of defending himself, the case, in consequence, was, in his opinion, closed on both sides. But Mr. Plunket, the Solicitor-General, rose and said—It is with extreme regret that, in these circumstances, I do not find myself at liberty to follow the example which has just been given me by the prisoner's counsel.

The Attorney-General then observed that, as the prisoner had not presented a defence, it was not necessary for the Crown Counsel to speak. It was then at his own desire that Mr. Plunket was now going to address the Court.

Mr. Plunket rose, and pronounced a speech which exceeded in length that of the Attorney-General. He spoke with elegance, precision, and severity. He summoned up all the proofs of guilt, and called down on the prisoner's head the just severity of the law. “You see here,” said he, “the centre, the life, the blood, and the soul

of this conspiracy. The prisoner arrives from France at the moment when war was going to be declared between that country and England; as soon as the war begins, he puts in execution his projects of treason, in concert with foreign invasion. It is easy, Gentlemen of the Jury, to deduce the consequence of such conduct. The avowed object of the conspiracy (for they would not have dared to own their real intentions) was to separate Ireland from England. Gentlemen, it would be losing my own time and that of the court to demonstrate to you the criminal folly of the man who seeks to dissolve the empire, the glory and happiness of which depends on its indissoluble union. Were it possible to break the ties that bind us to England, and to launch upon the ocean of revolutions, who could answer for the existence of Ireland for a single year? God and nature have made these two countries necessary to each other. May they remain united to the end of time.”

(64) “So,” continued Mr. Plunket, “they seek to introduce into this happy nation, which enjoys the benefits of a happy Constitution, the infection of their new French principles, and they cannot cite a single instance of oppression which can excuse this criminal attempt! Where is the man who cannot in this country exercise honest industry and enjoy in peace his property? What advantage would a wise

(64) “The eloquence of these words,” says Madden, “is scarcely inferior to this passage of Mr. Plunket’s speech in the debate upon the Union: ‘Doubtless I am deeply attached to the connection with England, because I regard it as essential to the liberty of Ireland. But I hesitate not to declare that if the ambition of a minister should attack that liberty and force me to the alternative of separating from England, or of sacrificing the independence of my country, I would cast to the winds the union with England, and clasp to my heart the independence of my country.’”

friend of liberty desire which is not fully possessed by this people (65). These idle stories of six hundred years of oppression, without a single fact to support them, are only a pretext for the ambitious and the factious to seduce credulity and ignorance. It is not for us, Gentlemen of the Jury, to fix limits to the mercy of God; and He alone knows what is reserved for those who sincerely repent. But if this unfortunate young man, who has made such a sad application of his great talents, still preserves some remains of the virtuous education he received, he will employ the time he has yet to live in making before God and man a solemn expiation of his crimes. It is said he saved the life of Farrell. May the recollection of that good action make his last moments less painful! But if he did not in his general plan for destruction meditate single murders, assuredly that is not a title to the compassion of his judges. I hope that all the blood shed in the streets of Dublin and on the scaffold will not be set down to the account of the prisoner. In the space of an hour what scenes of bloodshed and horror alarmed the capital, and yet they dare invoke the protection of God on their cause as if it were a just one; but, as it is guilty, atrocious, and abominable, I ardently pray God to confound and destroy it."

Lord Norbury then proceeded to charge the jury, and, to the great astonishment of those present, he was less severe and less violent in his language than Mr. Standish O'Grady and Mr. Plunket.

(65) "Three years had not passed," exclaims Madden, "since Mr. Plunket had cast to the winds the union with England, and clasped to his heart the independence of his country. That independence was annihilated, and there was not then in Ireland a single instance of oppression to be complained of! We were in possession of all the benefits that a sage friend of liberty could desire!"

The jury unanimously declared the prisoner guilty. Mr. MacNally, on his part, asked that sentence should not be passed until the next day. It was already late; the court had been sitting since ten in the morning, and it would be prolonged until eleven in the evening. This request was refused.

The Clerk of the Crown, then, turning to the prisoner, asked him, as it is usual to do, "What have you to say why sentence of death and execution should not be pronounced against you according to law?"

ROBERT EMMET rose, and advanced to the front of the dock, bowed slightly to the Court, and with the greatest calmness spoke as follows:— (66)

"My Lords, I am asked what I have to say why sentence of death should not be pronounced against me according to law.

"As to the legal arguments why sentence of death should

(66) I would not desire by my feeble translation to spoil the celebrated speech, the finest, according to Lord Cloncurry, of which the annals of Irish eloquence can boast. Unfortunately, the power of eloquence, and, above all, the elegance and dignity natural to the English language lose much in translation. The speech, written out from recollection by persons who were present, contains repetitions, tedious passages, and something of confusion in the order of the ideas, all which is attributable evidently to the imperfect way in which it has been reproduced. It is curious to compare the different editions. In the English *State Trials* and the *Reports* of Bidgeway all the nervous, forcible passages are left out, and there remain only the accents of a noble and touching resignation. In the *Rebellion Book*, on the contrary, the speech, printed gratis for the use of the people, takes a melo-dramatic character; the interruptions and exclamations are multiplied. I have endeavoured, by comparing the various editions, to restore it as it may have been really pronounced.

not be pronounced against me, I have nothing to say ; but, as to why my character should not be relieved from the imputations and calumnies thrown out against it, I have much to say. I do not imagine that your Lordships will give credit to what I am going to utter ; I have no hopes that I can anchor my character in the breast of this Court ; I only wish your Lordships may suffer it to float down your memories until it has found some more hospitable harbour to shelter it from the storms with which it is at present buffeted.

“I am arraigned here as being engaged in a conspiracy against the English Government in Ireland ; I avow it, I am a conspirator. For that I am to undergo the penalty of the law, and to answer for my intentions before God. I am ready to do the one and the other. Was I to suffer only death, after being adjudged guilty, I should bow in silence to the fate that awaits me ; but the sentence of the law which delivers over my body to the executioner consigns my character to obloquy. A man in my situation has not only to encounter the difficulties of fortune, but also the difficulties of prejudice ; when fortune abandons him, and gives him into the hands of his enemies, his character is immediately attacked and disfigured by calumny. For, in this case, my Lords, there must needs be a crime and a criminal ; between you and me posterity will one day decide. The man dies, but his memory lives. That mine may not perish, that it may live in the respect of my countrymen, I seize upon this opportunity to vindicate myself from some of the charges alleged against me.

“I am charged with being an Emissary of France. It is false. I did not wish to deliver up my country to a foreign power, and, least of all, to France. Never did I entertain the remotest idea of establishing French power in Ireland.

According to the paragraph with which the address of the Provisional Government begins, it is evident that every danger attached to an effort of our own for independence was deemed preferable to the still more fatal danger of introducing a French army into Ireland ; and here I shall remark upon a singular error in the argument of the Attorney-General. The proof, he says, that we counted upon the assistance of the French is, that the plan of the conspiracy was formed before their arrival. His argument clearly proves the contrary. Small, indeed, would be our claim to patriotism and sense, and palpable our affectation of the love of liberty, if we were to sell our country to a people who are not only slaves themselves, but the unprincipled and abandoned instruments of imposing slavery on others. Look what the conduct of France has been in Switzerland, in Holland, and in Italy. Could we hope for better in our own case ?

“ We wanted to deliver over our country into the hands of France ! And for what reason ? To change our masters ? Had we entertained such ideas, how could we have dared to speak of giving liberty to our fellow countrymen ? How could we have had such a high motive ? Every such conclusion, from whatsoever portion of the proclamation of the Provisional Government it may be drawn, is a calumny on our designs : there is not a single fact to justify it. Read the proclamation. Where is there a question of French aid ? Is it on that passage where the people of Ireland are called on to show the world that they are worthy of resuming their place among nations ? That they have the right to be recognised, as an independent people, by the one manifest proof which can be given, by throwing off, with their own hands, the yoke of England ? Had not the conspiracy been organised eight months before the commencement of hostilities ? It is said we intended delivering our

country up to France. The statement is made with no other proof than the assertion. Our declaration and our acts are evidence against your accusation.

“Connexion with France was, indeed, intended, but only as far as mutual interest would sanction or require. It is not only to-day that I have discovered by what bonds states are united. We know full well that union exists only by reason of their interest, and, if that interest should change, it is not written articles that can protect the weaker state and insure its independence. Therefore, the intention of the Provisional Government has never been to conclude a permanent alliance with France ; for we well know that treaties are soon regarded as null, and are violated on the slightest pretext whenever mutual interest has ceased to exist. It is true that there have been negotiations with France. This day there is at Paris, my Lords, an agent of the United Irishmen who negociates with the French Government, to obtain sufficient aid to accomplish the separation of Ireland and Great Britain, aid for which the preliminary condition will be a guarantee for Ireland like that which Franklin obtained for America. Of the success of this negotiation, England shall one day be the judge.

“Were the French to come as invaders or enemies, unin-
vited by the wishes of the people, I should oppose them to the utmost of my strength. Yes ! my countrymen, I would advise you to meet them on the beach with a sword in one hand and a torch in the other. I would meet them with all the destructive fury of war. I would animate my countrymen to immolate them in their boats before they had contaminated the soil of my country. If they succeeded in landing, and if forced to retire before superior discipline, I would dispute every inch of ground, burn every blade of grass, and the last entrenchment of liberty should be my grave. What

I could not do myself, if I should fall, I should leave as a last charge to my countrymen to accomplish ; because I should feel conscious that life, any more than death, is unprofitable, when a foreign nation holds my country in subjection.

“ My Lords, it may be part of the system of angry justice to bow a man’s mind by humiliation to meet the ignominy of the scaffold ; but worse to me than the scaffold’s shame, or the scaffold’s terrors, would be the imputation of having been the agent of the despotism and ambition of France ; and whilst I have breath I will call upon my countrymen not to believe me guilty of so foul a crime against their liberties and against their happiness. My object, and that of the rest of the Provisional Government, was to effect a total separation between Great Britain and Ireland.”

(Here the prisoner was interrupted. Lord Norbury imperiously commanded him to be silent, and to listen to the sentence of the law.)

“ I have understood that Judges sometimes think it their duty to hear with patience and speak with humanity, to exhort the victims of the laws, and to offer, with tender benignity, their opinions of the motives by which he was actuated in the crime of which he was adjudged guilty. That a Judge has thought it his duty so to have done, I have no doubt ; but where is the boasted freedom of your institutions—where is the vaunted impartiality, clemency, and mildness of your courts of justice, if an unfortunate prisoner, whom your policy, and not justice, is about to deliver into the hands of the executioner, is not suffered to explain his motives, sincerely and truly, and to vindicate the principles by which he was actuated ? You, my Lord, are the Judge. I am the supposed culprit. By a revolution

of power, we might change places, though we never could change characters. If I stand at the bar of this court, and dare not vindicate my character, what a farce is your justice ! If I stand at this bar, and dare not vindicate my character, how dare you calumniate it ? Does the sentence of death, which your unhallowed policy inflicts on my body, condemn my tongue to silence, and my reputation to reproach ? Your executioner may abridge the period of my existence ; but, while I exist, I shall not forbear to vindicate my character and motives from your aspersions : and, as a man to whom fame is dearer than life, I will make the last use of that life in doing justice to that reputation which is to live after me, and which is the only legacy I can leave to those I honour and love, and for whom I am proud to perish. As men, my Lords, we must appear on the great day at one common Tribunal ; and it will then remain for the Searcher of all hearts to show a collective universe who was engaged in the most virtuous actions, or attached by the purest motives—my country's oppressors, or——”

(At these words there was some agitation in the court, and the prisoner was again commanded to be silent.)

“ My Lords, will a dying man be denied the legal privilege of exculpating himself in the eyes of the community of an undeserved reproach, thrown upon him during his trial, by charging him with ambition, and attempting to cast away, for a paltry consideration, the liberties of his country ? Why did your Lordships insult me ? Or rather, why insult justice, in demanding of me why sentence of death should not be pronounced against me ? I know, My Lords, that form prescribes that you should ask the question—the form also presents the right of answering. This, no doubt, may be dispensed with, and so might the whole ceremony of the

trial, since sentence was already pronounced at the Castle before the jury were impanelled. (67) Your Lordships are but the Priests of the Oracle, and I insist on the whole of the forms."

(Here Mr. Emmet paused, and the Court desired him to proceed.)

"Well, then, for all those treasons what motive is alleged? Ambition! Had I been ambitious, my fellow-citizens, it would have been easy enough for me, with my education, my fortune, the rank and consideration of my family, to seat myself, one day, among the haughtiest of your oppressors. But what I have toiled for was to destroy that Government which rules by impiety against the Most High; which treats his hapless people like locusts of the forest; which makes man hunt down his brother, and strike him to the earth if he believes a little more or less than the creed of the Government; which reigns in the midst of the tears of the widows and the orphans it has made——"

(Violent murmurs here made the voice of the accused inaudible for some time.)

ROBERT EMMET—"When my spirit shall have joined these legions of martyred heroes who have shed their blood on the scaffold, and in the field, in defence of their country, this is my hope: that my memory and name may serve to animate those who survive me. I have had no other aim but that of delivering my country from the inhuman oppression which she has too long and too patiently endured; and I have confidence, chimerical as this noble enterprise may appear, that there is yet in Ireland enough of union and strength——"

(67) For the falsehood and mockery of the trial by jury in Ireland, see M. Gustave de Beaumont, tome 1, p. 266.

(A new interruption rendered his voice inaudible again.)

“If I speak thus, it is not to give myself the puerile satisfaction of causing you an instant of vexation. What I have said was not intended for your Lordships, whose position inspires me rather with pity than envy ; my explanations are for my fellow-citizens. If there be a true Irishman here let my last words console him in the hour of affliction.

“ I have been charged with such importance as to be considered the key-stone of the combination of Irishmen, or, as it has been expressed, the life and blood of this conspiracy. You do me honour over much ; you have given to the subaltern all the credit of the superior. There are men concerned in this conspiracy who are not only superior to me, but even to your own conceptions of yourself, my Lord—men before the splendour of whose genius and virtues I should bow with respectful deference, and who would not deign to call you friend, who would not disgrace themselves by shaking your blood-stained hands——”

(Here Mr. Emmet was interrupted by Lord Norbury.)

ROBERT EMMET—“ What, my Lord ! shall you tell me that I am accountable for all the blood that has and will be shed in this struggle of the oppressed against the oppressor ? Shall you tell me this, and must I be such a slave as not to cast back the accusation on you, my Lord, who might swim on the innocent blood you have shed in Ireland——”

(At these words the Court interfered to silence the prisoner, and Lord Norbury appeared evidently agitated.)

ROBERT EMMET—“ I do not fear to approach the Omnipotent Judge to answer for the conduct of my short life, and am I to be appalled by a mere remnant of mortality here ? Let no man dare, when I am dead, to charge me with dishonour ; let no man attaint my memory by believing that I could have engaged in any cause but that of my country’s

liberty and independence. I would not have submitted to a foreign oppressor for the same reason that I would resist a domestic oppressor. France, even when our enemy, could not be a more implacable one than the enemy we have in the heart of this country. . . .”

Lord Norbury—“Mr. Emmet, you have been called upon to show cause, if any you have, why the judgment of the law should not be enforced against you. Instead of showing anything in point of law why judgment should not pass, you have proceeded in a manner the most unbecoming a person in your situation ; you have avowed and endeavoured to vindicate principles totally subversive of the tranquillity, well-being, and happiness of that country which gave you birth ; and you have broached treason the most abominable. You, Sir, had the honour to be a gentleman by birth, and your father filled a respectable situation under the Government. You had an elder brother, whom death snatched away, and who, when living, was one of the greatest ornaments of the bar. The laws of the country were the study of his youth, and the study of his maturer life was to cultivate and support them. He left you a noble example to follow, and if he had lived he would have given your talents the same direction as his own, and have taught you to admire and preserve that Constitution for the destruction of which you have conspired with the most profligate and abandoned, and associated yourself with hostlers, butchers, and such persons, whom you invited to Council when you erected your Provisional Government. . . . When at night you came out, heading a band of assassins, and joining in their atrocities, you must have lost all sentiment of what you were.”

After having thanked the Judge for the compliments he addressed to his family, Mr. EMMET continued :—“If the

spirits of the illustrious dead participate in the concerns of those who were dear to them in this transitory life, I supplicate my father to look down on his suffering son, and see has he for one moment deviated from those moral and patriotic principles which he so early instilled into his youthful mind, and for which he has now to offer up his life.

“My Lords, it is not my intention to go beyond the bounds of moderation, and I pray you to stop me if I pass them, but you must comprehend that it is impossible for me to defend myself without saying some things which are disagreeable for you to hear.”

Lord Norbury—“Mr. Emmet you are too well acquainted with the laws not to understand that it is impossible for me to permit you to employ a dangerous and perverse eloquence attacking the very principles of the Government to which you owe obedience.”

ROBERT EMMET—“My Lord——”

Lord Norbury—“If you have anything to say on the point of law, you may speak ; if not, I cannot allow you. What you have already said confirms and justifies the verdict of the jury.”

ROBERT EMMET—“Then I shall be silent. My justification rests upon abstract principles and the application of them. I would have developed both the one and the other. I was wrong, no doubt, in reckoning on the liberty of defence in this country. But I would descend to the tomb with a heavy weight upon my heart if it could be believed that I have acted with a view to my personal interest or ambition. I adjure all those who have heard the Attorney-General to banish from their minds so false an imputation.

“My Lord, you are impatient for the sacrifice. The blood which you seek is not congealed by the artificial terrors which surround your victim—it circulates warmly and

unruffled through its channels, and in a little time it will cry to Heaven,—be yet patient !

“ I have but a few words more to say. I am going to my cold and silent grave; my lamp of life is nearly extinguished; I have parted with everything that was dear to me in this life, for my country's cause ; with the idol of my soul, the object of my affections. My race is run ; the grave opens to receive me, and I sink into its bosom. I have but one request to make at my departure from this world, it is the charity of its silence. Let no man write my epitaph ; for as no man, who knows my motives, dare now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them rest in obscurity and peace. Let my memory be left in oblivion, and my tomb remain uninscribed, until other times and other men can do justice to my character. When my country takes her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written. I have done.” (68)

(68) The translator cannot resist giving here the author's beautiful version of this admirable passage of Emmet's speech :—

“ My lords, vous attendez avec impatience votre victime. Tout l'artifice de terreurs dont vous l'avez entourée, n'a pas glacé dans ses veines le sang dont vous êtes avides, et tout à l'heure, il criera vengeance au ciel ; mais patience encore. Je n'ai plus que peu de mots à dire ; je marche à mon froid et muet tombeau. Le flambeau de ma vie est presque éteint. Je me suis séparé, pour la cause de mon pays, de tout ce qui m'était cher dans la vie, de l'idole de mon âme, de l'objet de mon affection. Il ne me reste plus qu'à recevoir ma récompense. Ma course est terminée. La tombe s'ouvre pour me recevoir, et je vais disparaître dans son sein. Je n'ai qu'une demande à faire au monde en le quittant : c'est la charité de son silence. Qu'aucun homme n'écrive mon épitaphe, car aucun homme connaissant mes motifs n'oserait aujourd'hui les défendre ; qu'on ne souffre pas que l'ignorance et le préjugé les accusent.

Lord Norbury—"I would have wished to recall you to sentiments more becoming to a man in your sad position. Very different conduct, very different language, would become him who has criminally attempted to overthrow the laws and constitution of his country."

ROBERT EMMET—"I repeat once more that I am not the author of the conspiracy : I found it organised when I arrived here. I was asked to join it ; I took time to reflect, and I was told that, whatever might be my determination, the affair should go on with me or without me. After mature deliberation, finding it in conformity with my principles, I consented to take part in it. Placed in the same circumstances, I should do so again."

Lord Norbury—"I exhort you not to quit this life in such rooted sentiments against the Government of your country, but before death to make your peace with God and your king. Such a state of mind will obtain your pardon in the world to come, and will help you to support with firmness the terrible sentence which I am now to pronounce against you."

Then Lord Norbury, with an emotion which betrayed itself in the tone of his voice, and such as he had never before shown in similar circumstances, read the sentence of death, which was to be carried into effect the following day, at one o'clock. (The prisoner was to be hanged and beheaded, and according to the usage.) The prisoner retired, after bowing respectfully to the court.

Qu'ils reposent dans l'obscurité et la paix ; que ma mémoire soit laissée dans l'oubli ; que ma tombe reste sans inscription jusqu'à ce que d'autres temps et d'autres hommes puissent rendre justice à mon caractère. Quand mon pays aura repris son rang parmi les nations de la terre, alors, mais seulement alors, que mon épitaphe soit écrite. J'ai fini."

The condemnation of Robert Emmet offered nothing extraordinary at a time when the penalty of death for political offences was uncontested, as, in fact, he was legally guilty. But the animosity of the court only served to bring to light with more force that wonderful combination of audacity and mildness which gained the hearts of those who were present at the trial. Such pathetic accents penetrated the soul with a deep emotion ; the right which conscience has over force thrills through the immortal part of our nature. So much firmness of mind, united to such boldness, surprise us in a man so young, struggling with such a terrible fate. We perceive in his words the accents of a proud soul, which has the consciousness of its own grandeur, and at the same time I know not what of anxious pre-occupation for the name he shall leave to posterity. The touching peroration of this speech reminds us of the farewell to life which Sophocles makes for Antigone : "For thee I have sacrificed my life, my youth, my love, all that I held most dear in the world. I am going down full of life to the abodes of the dead. I shall see no more the light of heaven ! Oh, grave ! Oh, bed of death ! Eternal abode ! I hear the voice of death calling me, and the gods are silent. Where are my crimes ?"

It will suffice to read the trial of Robert Emmet to be convinced that justice and the good cause were on the side of Ireland. Great minds enlighten the darkness of the times in which they live. Some verses of Dante give us more insight into the Italian republics than all the contemporary chronicles. As the traveller sails along by the shores of the Gulf of Amalfi, the azure waves open under the pressure of the barque, which cleaves the waters, and lets him see the bright glow of the coral which gleams at the foot of the dark rocks ; so does the lightning of truth

pierce through the uncertainty and contradiction of human opinions ; and often the voice of passion, more eloquent than logic, gives to that truth still clouded in doubt the seal of irresistible evidence.

All who were present at the trial, among whom we must name Mr. Buchanan, Consul of the United States, (69) Dr. Maccartney, Dr. M'Cabe, and Dr. Haydon, declared that they never heard anything to equal the penetrating eloquence of the speech of Robert Emmet ; and, thirty years after, the persons who were present could not speak without emotion of the grace, the power, the self-possession, and the high spirit with which he faced his judges. He spoke so loud that he was distinctly heard at the outer doors of the court, and yet there was nothing declamatory or exaggerated in his delivery. "His voice," on the contrary, says Madden, "was modulated with exquisite delicacy, and his gestures, more or less vehement, corresponded with the accents of his voice. He advanced and drew back in the dock with a certain movement of the body which was peculiar to him when he spoke, and was not ungraceful." And here we must refer to evidence which cannot be suspected of partiality. That same correspondent of the *Times*, whose letter was signed "Verax," who entirely condemns the Insurrection, adds in ending his letter :—"Nevertheless, I must say that he was great amid all his errors. When, on the day of his trial—the tomb already open to receive him—he made the very walls ring with the power of his eloquence. I saw that viper (70) whom his father had nourished in his bosom tremble under his lashes, and that scum of humanity (71)

(69) The present President of the United States.

(70) Mr. Plunket.

(71) Lord Norbury.

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who was one of his judges grow pale and tremble on his seat. It was, under such circumstances, an effort almost superhuman : and when, after inflicting that memorable chastisement, and hurling that withering defiance at his enemies, he defended the principles on which his conduct reposed, he displayed a moral integrity, a talent and intrepidity, unparalleled in the annals of the world."

The statement in the *Times* involuntarily serves to confirm that fine sentiment of Barrington's :—Oppression ever retains the conscientiousness and the timidity of crime ; resistance to tyranny makes him who tramples on it blush on his throne. "Never shall I forget," says the Marquis of Harcourt, one of the officers of the English army who put down the Insurrection, "the moment when, rising with a manner full of grace and mildness, Emmet offered to his country the sacrifice of his life. All eyes filled with tears. We went out sobbing, and I thought for a moment that justice was severe and the conspirator to be pitied."

It was eleven o'clock at night when Robert was taken back to prison. He stopped at the grated window of the cell in which Mr. Saint John Mason was confined, and said to him—"I am to be hanged to-morrow." The *London Chronicle*, a Government paper, giving an account of his last moments and execution, is truly scandalised at the careless and profane levity in which he spoke of his end :—"He remained to the last moments what he had shown himself at the trial yesterday—with the same mixture of nonchalance and effrontery—and seemed to mock at the terrible circumstances in which he was placed. Nothing is more unlike the calm of the true Christian. God preserve us from people with such principles ! But we never saw a man die like him." It may here be remarked that among these modern Romans, as among the ancients, religion, an

object of sincere veneration, is also a great instrument of Government. According to the same paper, Robert Emmet was a determined infidel. The minister of the Holy Gospel, who exhorted him in the last moments, made vain efforts to combat those fatal doctrines which he had embraced on the Continent, and to bring him back to better sentiments. Robert Emmet said to him, at last—"I thank you for the trouble you take, but it is useless. My ideas on these points are settled for this long time past, and it is not at this moment that I can change them."

We are always inclined to inquire with interest into the nature of the solution which any great intellect has given to itself of the enigma of our mysterious destiny, still more, perhaps, when that intellect is joined to a sincere spirit, capable of devotedness even to martyrdom. By birth Robert Emmet was a Protestant, and a member of the Established Church. Some historians, however, have affirmed with the *London Chronicle* that the faith of this young disciple of the French Revolution was that of Plato and of *La profession du Vicaire Savoyard*, one of the finest religious monuments, perhaps, that the hand of man ever raised to the pale light of reason. It is in that faith, and that hope, that more than one martyr to liberty, in our own times, have died: Malesherbes, André Chenier, Bailly, Madame Roland, &c. The Italians tell us that Mario Pagano, who perished on the scaffold at Naples in 1799, read during the last night of his life, to his fellow-prisoners, destined a few days after to the same fate, that sublime apostrophe, in which the radiant gates of another life seem opening on a sudden at the voice of genius.

However, Thomas Moore assures us, in his *Memoirs*, that Lord Edward Fitzgerald, as well as young Emmet, happier than those children of an unbelieving age of incredulity,

joined to the faith in the French Revolution a most ardent and firm faith in the truths of Christianity. As for Robert Emmet, it is certain, from the accounts of those who were in prison with him (the only accounts that are authentic), that he remained faithful to the religion of his youth.

The authorities came about midnight to take the prisoner away to a distance of two miles, under pretext of bringing him nearer to the place of execution. The true reason was that his speech had produced a great effect, and put in motion the passions of the people. They feared an insurrection to deliver him, and they thought that, in case of an attack, the new prison would be more easy to defend than that of Kilmainham.

Robert Emmet complained of not being left at peace for the few hours he had to live. They had, in fact, loaded him with chains with so much brutality, and so little precaution, that the blood flowed from his wounded limbs. The jailor delivered him from his chains, and gave him something to eat, of which he was much in need, for he had remained at the court-house from ten in the morning until eleven at night, without tasting any food. The jailor continued, says the correspondent of the *Times*, to treat him with kindness up to the moment when, thanking him for his humanity, Robert Emmet left the prison for the scaffold.

Youth and fatigue aiding, he slept soundly. He rose with the first dawn of that day which was to shine on his execution—he rose, knelt down and prayed, asked for a cup of milk, which he drank; then wrote to his brother in America. His letter contained the plan of the Insurrection. Robert Emmet attached great importance to the fact of his brother being made acquainted with this plan, which could

alone enable him to judge of his projects and the causes of failure. His letter contained all the details. (72) He requested Mr. Wickham, Secretary of State for Ireland, to have it sent to his brother, and wrote to him at the same time the following letter :—

“ROBERT EMMET TO MR. WICKHAM.

“SIR,—Had I been permitted to proceed with my vindication, it was my intention not only to have acknowledged the delicacy with which I feel, with gratitude, that I have been personally treated, but also to have done the most public justice to the mildness of the present administration in this country, and at the same time to have acquitted them, as far as rested with me, of any charge of remissness in not having previously detected a conspiracy, which, from its closeness, I know it was impossible to have done. I con-

(72) Robert Emmet terminates the succinct exposition of his projects in these words:—“I know how disingenuous men will pronounce upon this failure without knowing one single circumstance of those that have brought it about. Little will it signify to them whether it be chance or reason that has favoured their prediction. They will only repeat that they predicted it. They will not distinguish between a prediction accomplished and a prediction justified. Those who, had we succeeded, would have attributed to the victors a sagacity beyond bounds will now affirm that nothing had been provided against ; that everything had been badly ordered, &c. They had predicted, too, that the secret could not be kept, the preparations and the plan organised, the day fixed for the attack, without information immediately reaching the Castle: that the government would let the plot ripen in order to be able to crush it at their ease; and of all this nothing has come to pass. Those who would have flattered will calumniate; and, not content with their right of claiming the merit of having partly predicted what has occurred, will violate by their rash judgments the sanctuary in which misfortune hides itself.”

ness that I should have preferred this mode, if it had been permitted, as it would thereby have enabled me to clear myself of an imputation under which I might in consequence lie, and to have stated why such an administration did not prevent. but, under the peculiar situation of the country, perhaps, rather accelerated my determination to make an effort for the overthrow of a Government, of which I do not think equally high.

“However, as I have been deprived of this opportunity, I think it right to make an acknowledgment, which justice requires of me as a man, and which I do not feel in the least derogatory from my decided principles as an Irishman.—I am, &c., &c.”

One of his friends, then a prisoner in Kilmainham Jail, obtained permission to see him on the day of his execution, and, going into his cell, found him occupied in reading the litany of the Established Church. The first movement of Robert's was to ask him about his mother, whom he knew to have been ill since the day he was arrested. The poor woman had borne with the courage of a Roman matron the exile of her eldest son ; the letters which she addressed him in 1798, at the time of his captivity, are most touching in the restrained tenderness which they reveal, joined to the fear of asking him to make any sacrifice inconsistent with his dignity. “Do not be uneasy,” she said to him, “Your honour is as safe in our hands as in your own.” But, when she saw the youngest, and the most beloved of her children, the pride and joy of her life, condemned to a cruel death, sorrow, and her continual pre-occupation about the frightful destiny that awaited him, carried her off in a short time. She died three days before the execution of her son. On learning his mother's death, Emmet was silent for some instants. “It is better,” said he at last, “that it should be so;”

then with a sigh, he added, that he hoped to see her again in Heaven; and said no more on the subject. But these last words, naturally bringing the conversation on religious subjects, he told his friend, that he adhered to the articles of faith taught by his church. His hopes of salvation reposed on no merit of his own, but solely on the sacrifice of his Saviour, who had been willing to die an ignominious death on the cross for him.

He told him that they had come that very morning to take away every sharp instrument from his cell ; that the precaution was useless, for he disapproved of suicide : he considered it an honour and a privilege to die for a good cause ; and as to the prejudice which attached a sort of infamy to the kind of death which awaited him, it mattered little to him, when he remembered that Russell and Algernon Sydney mounted on the scaffold for the same cause as his. Coming back again to politics, he told his friend that he had always distrusted the alliance with France. It was almost in spite of himself that he had consented to enter into communication with the first consul, and he had no great confidence in the negociations that were still carried on. He hoped that there would one day yet be in Ireland enough of courage and patriotism to enable her to free herself by her own hands. He moreover referred to what he had said in his speech ; if they had allowed him to speak freely, he would have willingly done justice to the mildness of the existing administration in Ireland. The last letter he wrote, an hour before going to the scaffold, was addressed to Mr. Richard Curran, who had, it appears, written to him, or sent him word that he had pardoned him what had taken place. This is the letter :—

“ MY DEAREST RICHARD,—I find I have but a few hours to live ; but if it was the last moment, and that the power of

utterance was leaving me, I would thank you from the bottom of my heart for your generous expressions of affection and forgiveness to me. If there was any one in the world in whose breast my death might be supposed not to stifle every spark of resentment it might be you. I have deeply injured you—I have injured the happiness of a sister that you love, and who was formed to give happiness to every one about her, instead of having her own mind a prey to affliction. Oh! Richard, I have no excuse to offer, but that I meant the reverse; I intended as much happiness for Sarah as the most ardent lover could have given her. I never did tell you how much I idolized her. It was not with a wild or unfounded passion, but it was an attachment increasing every hour, from an admiration of the purity of her mind and respect for her talents. I did dwell in secret upon the prospect of our union. I did hope that success while it afforded the opportunity of our union, might be a means of confirming an attachment which misfortune had called forth. I did not look to honours for myself—praise I would have asked from the lips of no man—but I would have wished to read in the glow of Sarah's countenance that her husband was respected.

“My love, Sarah! it was not thus I thought to have requited your affection. I did hope to be a propound which your affections might have clung, and which would never have been shaken; but a rude blast has snapped it, and they have fallen over a grave.

“This is no time for affliction. I have had public motives to sustain my mind, and I have not suffered it to sink; but there have been moments in my imprisonment when my mind was sunk by grief on her account that death would have been a refuge.

“God bless you, my dearest Richard. I am obliged to leave off immediately.

“ROBERT EMMET.”

This letter seems to have been addressed to the brother, in order to be shown to the sister. “It was written at noon, one hour before the execution of Mr. Emmet,” says Richard Curran. The firmness and the regularity of the writing are a striking and touching proof that the expectation of the approaching event did not trouble his senses more than it intimidated his heart. It is to be remarked also that in these lines, in which the shadow of death blends with the deepest sentiment in life, in which passion is veiled under a tenderness almost maternal, Robert Emmet this only once gives way to the expression of some feeling of regret for that life which he was leaving at twenty-three; his ardent and tender attachment for Miss Curran seemed to be the only tie which he had difficulty in breaking. This noble and courageous young man showed, however, so much resignation in presence of such a sad fate that he did not even say as André Chenier did :—*Quel dommage ! il y avait quelque chose là* ;—he never once complained of the cruelty of his fate.

At last, at one o'clock, he sent word to the Sheriffs that he was ready. When they entered into his room, he told them that he had two requests to make them; the first, that they would allow him as much as possible the free use of his arms; I have no idea, said he, that the second can be granted to me, but I only wish that it may be remembered that I made the request; it is, that I may be permitted to die in the uniform of the rebel army. It was on his part a last declaration that he took a glory in the cause for which he was about to give his life. Of those two requests one

was granted, the other naturally refused. He was dressed as on the day of his trial, entirely in black, he wore a black cravat and top boots.

A remarkable proof of the empire he had over himself and over others was offered in his coming out of the prison. The mildness and charm of his manners had conciliated the affection of all who approached him ; but there was above all a turnkey attached to his person, who conceived for him that sort of passion which superior beings sometimes inspire in the rudest and most vulgar natures. When he left his prison, followed by the Sheriffs, and preceded by the executioner, this turnkey stood on his way in the corridor, and his tears fell abundantly. Emmet stopped a moment, surprised at an explosion of grief which he was far from expecting ; then, as his movements were not free, he kissed him on the cheek, and this man, accustomed and hardened for more than twenty years to the scenes of horror exhibited in prisons, fell senseless at his feet. (73)

A popular movement had been apprehended, so that Dublin was full of troops. The crowd filled up the streets and the windows. The vehicle bearing Robert Emmet to the scaffold advanced slowly, preceded and followed by regiments of cavalry and infantry. "One would have thought," says Madden, "that it was a military interment, and the young man in the coach seemed to assist as a stranger at the ceremony, exchanging now and then a friendly look with those whom he recognised in the crowd.

(73) "When the young rebel," says the *Nation*, "came out of the prison, with his countenance serene and brilliant as that of an angel, the jailor who had him in charge fell senseless at his feet." Thus vanish before the supreme equality of death all the inequalities of this world, even that greatest and most mysterious of all moral inequality.

(74) He showed, during the entire way, not an affected indifference, but a courage without ostentation, or, rather, what astonished all who saw him (and I know several persons still living who were present at his execution), the most complete absence of the feeling of fear, joined to the just pride of dying for a good cause." Robert Emmet perceived on his passage one of his friends to whom he made a sign to approach, and gave him a letter addressed to Miss Curran. The person who took the letter was observed and arrested ; the letter never reached its destination.

A scaffold had been raised at the entrance of Thomas-Street, where the Insurrection broke out, in order that the expiation might take place on the very spot of the crime. An immense crowd pressed round the scaffold, and in it were many of Emmet's friends, anxious to catch his last words. He alighted from the carriage, followed by the executioner, the sheriffs, and the Protestant minister, who accompanied him, and mounted quickly the ladder to the platform. The scaffold was not raised much above the ground. It was expected that Robert Emmet would address the people, but in this he disappointed the expectations of his friends as well as of his enemies. He avoided in the few words he pronounced any allusion to politics, and merely said : "My friends, I die in peace, and with sentiments of love and charity towards all men." These words, pronounced briefly with a firm and sonorous voice, were, says Mr. H., his former college friend, the last accents we heard of that voice, which, in his wonderful speeches on a quite different stage, had so often charmed us and carried

(74) The last details of the execution of Emmet are perfectly authentic ; they were related to Madden by Mr. H., a Protestant clergyman, Emmet's comrade at college, who was at the foot of the scaffold during his last moments.

us away. It is thought that the object of these last words was to calm down the irritation which his death was causing in the people, and to prevent every idea of vengeance on the person of his judges. Assassination has been often, it is well known, the retaliation of the Irish people against tyranny.

Then Robert Emmet took off his cravat, and assisted himself in fixing the rope round his neck. When the execution was over, the executioner took down the lifeless corpse and laid it on the scaffold ; those who saw it, then, were struck with the beautiful and touching expression that the young martyr had preserved in such a cruel death. There was no change, but the greatest tranquility on his features, on which

*La douleur fugitive avait empreint sa grace,
La mort, sa majesté.*

The executioner cut off his head, and, showing it to the people, cried out in a loud voice, "This is the head of Robert Emmet, a traitor !" The crowd answered by a dead silence. (75)

When the troops left the place, some of the persons present, who had gone off with precipitation, were seen to return back, and, looking about them on every side uneasily, to dip their handkerchiefs in the blood, and hide them immediately in their bosoms. The coffin was deposited for some hours at the prison, where the jailor waited for the

(75) " 'Tis thus," says Madden, " that we saw, writhing in the agonies of the most cruel and degrading of all deaths, a creature young, amiable, generous, endowed with fine talents, and guilty only of loving his country 'not wisely but too well ;' had he succeeded it would have been said that he loved it well and wisely. To see thus mutilated and profaned before His eyes the noblest of the works of God, was a spectacle that would have made the angels weep."

relatives or friends of Robert Emmet to come and take it. But the relatives or friends of Robert Emmet were for the most part in prison or in flight, and those who had escaped the general disaster feared by making themselves known that they would turn the attention of the Government to themselves. After waiting some hours, they buried him in the field of the hospital reserved for the poor and for criminals. A few days after, the coffin was secretly conveyed away in the night, and transported to St. Michan's Church. Madden, who went to recognise the spot, remarked at the extremity of the church a large marble slab, without an epitaph, placed horizontally on a tomb. It is the largest in the church, and the only one which remains without an inscription. "Is that," says he, "the tomb which was to remain without an epitaph until other men and other times do justice to him whom it contains?" The church is now deserted and silent; but above that tomb hover the veiled genii of youth, of love, and of liberty, who reproach an ungrateful country with its neglect.

To silent sorrow soon succeeded a cry of pity and admiration, which that heroic death forced even from his enemies. "Emmet mounted on the scaffold with firmness,"—wrote the Lord Lieutenant to his Government;—"he has drowned the ignominy of his death in the magnanimity of his conduct;—the same enthusiasm which led him astray aided him to bear with firmness the last rigours of fate." This is noble language, which does honour to Lord Hardwicke. In the English Parliament, Lord Castlereagh found accents worthy of his great days of 1798. "The wrongs of Ireland," said he—"who speaks of the wrongs of Ireland? Ask that young man who thought he could make no better use of his fortune than to employ it in upsetting the Government of his country, and who has just expiated on the

scaffold. Whatever he may have said on his trial, I have no doubt but his intention was to deliver Ireland up to France, and to introduce into it a French army."

A few days after, General Russell followed Robert Emmet to the scaffold. "On the eve of appearing in the presence of God," says he in his last speech, "I cannot say that I take a glory in anything ; but I declare that I have never done evil in obeying the inspirations of my conscience. If I needed an example to encourage me to bear my fate, I would find one in that of the young hero, my great and dear friend, Robert Emmet, who has just perished a martyr to the cause of his country, and to that of liberty. I am already in the vale of years : I have learned to know the vanity of life, and the value of the illusions of this world ; but he was in the flower of his youth, surrounded by every thing that could attach him to this life, with the most tender of affections in his heart, and all the enchanting charms of passion and innocence. Even at this moment I cannot think of his death without enthusiasm."

What, in the meantime, became of that high-spirited, delicate, and timid being, whose love had thus become known to the world ? The unhappy girl, an exile from her father's roof, had taken refuge in the family of a Quaker, a Mr. Penrose, of Woodhill, who received her with the greatest kindness, and loaded her with marks of affection and sympathy. But how complicated and painful was the position of Miss Curran may be more easily conceived than described. During the revolution there was more than one woman "whose soul was pierced with a sword," and who saw the man she loved perish on the scaffold ; but at least all was simple in their sentiment as in their situation. A great interest was attached to the misfortune of Miss Curran ; in the heart of the Irish people she was the widow of a hero who

died for their country, and the object of their silent adoration. But she lived in a society half-English, who, though they pitied Robert Emmet, considered that he had deserved his fate. It is said that the poor girl, so unhappy and so abandoned, often stole out at nightfall and passed entire nights beside the tomb of her lover; and here, I think, I cannot do better, than to give my readers, who do not know it, a few lines of those touching pages, entitled “The Broken Heart,” which Washington Irving devoted to the *souvenir* of this tragic lore.

“Every one must recollect the tragical story of young E——, the Irish patriot; it was too touching to be soon forgotten. During the troubles in Ireland, he was tried, condemned, and executed on a charge of treason. His fate made a deep impression on public sympathy. He was so young—so intelligent—so generous—so brave—so everything that we are apt to like in a young man. His conduct under trial, too, was so lofty and intrepid. The noble indignation with which he repelled the charge of treason against his country—the eloquent vindication of his name—and his pathetic appeal to posterity, in the hopeless hour of condemnation—all these entered deeply into every generous bosom, and even his enemies lamented the stern policy that dictated his execution.

“But there was one heart whose anguish it would be impossible to describe. In happier days and fairer fortunes he had won the affections of a beautiful and interesting girl, the daughter of a late celebrated Irish barrister. She loved him with the disinterested fervour of a woman’s first and early love. When every worldly maxim arrayed itself against him; when blasted in fortune, and disgrace and danger darkened around his name, she loved him the more ardently for his very sufferings. If, then, his fate could

awaken the sympathy even of his foes, what must have been the agony of her, whose whole soul was occupied by his image? Let those tell who have had the portals of the tomb suddenly closed between them and the being they most loved on earth—who have sat at its threshold, as one shut out in a cold and lonely world, whence all that was most lovely and loving had departed.

“But, then, the horrors of such a grave! so frightful, so dishonoured! there was nothing for memory to dwell on that could soothe the pang of separation—none of those tender though melancholy circumstances, which endear the parting scene—nothing to melt sorrow into those blessed tears, sent like the dews of heaven to revive the heart in the parting hour of anguish.

“To render her widowed situation more desolate, she had incurred her father’s displeasure by her unfortunate attachment, and was an exile from the paternal roof. But could the sympathy and kind offices of friends have reached a spirit so shocked and driven in by horror, she would have experienced no want of consolation, for the Irish are a people of quick and generous sensibilities. The most delicate and cherishing attentions were paid her by families of wealth and distinction. She was led into society, and they tried by all kinds of occupation and amusement to dissipate her grief, and wean her from the tragical story of her love. But it was all in vain. There are some strokes of calamity which scathe and scorch the soul—which penetrate to the vital seat of happiness—and blast it, never again to put forth bud or blossom. She never objected to frequent the haunts of pleasure, but was as much alone there as in the depths of solitude; walking about in a sad reverie, apparently unconscious of the world around her. She carried with her an inward woe that mocked at all the blandish-

ments of friendship, and 'heeded not the song of the charmer, charm he never so wisely.'

"The person who told me her story had seen her at a masquerade. There can be no exhibition of far-gone wretchedness more striking and painful than to meet in such a scene. To find it wandering like a spectre, lonely and joyless, where all around is gay—to see it dressed out in the trappings of mirth, and looking so wan and woe-begone, as if it had tried in vain to cheat the poor heart into a momentary forgetfulness of sorrow. After strolling through the splendid rooms and giddy crowd with an air of utter abstraction, she sat herself down on the steps of an orchestra, and, looking about for some time with a vacant air, that showed her insensibility to the garish scene, she began, with the capriciousness of a sickly heart, to warble a little plaintive air. She had an exquisite voice ; but on this occasion it was so simple, so touching, it breathed forth such a soul of wretchedness, that she drew a crowd mute and silent around her, and melted everyone into tears."

The scene described by Washington Irving did not take place in a ball, but at a party at Mr. Penroses. It is true, with the exception of some details which I took the liberty of suppressing, because they are not exact. The more history resembles romance, the more careful we must be not to introduce romance into history—it is to take from it, at the same time, its interest and its originality.

It was at the house of Mr. Penrose that Miss Curran became acquainted, some years after, with an officer of the English army, Captain Sturgeon, nephew of Lord Fitzwilliam, who was greatly struck by her charms, her misfortune, and the entire state of loneliness in which she was placed. High-minded, endowed with delicacy of sentiment and feeling, he was affected at the idea of giving solace to one so

unhappy and friendless, whose relatives repulsed her, and who was depending on the pity of strangers. He offered her his hand and his fortune, which she refused ; he persevered ; she then had a full explanation with him, and told him that he ought to know that her heart was another's. He proposed to be her protector in a world in which she was so much abandoned, and decided her by offering her the prospect of leaving Ireland, where she had suffered so much. When she started for Italy, her health was already seriously undermined by sorrow. Admiral Napier, who knew this noble and interesting person at Naples, could only speak of her as "the walking statue." Change of climate, the tender care her husband took of her, all were in vain ; she died a few months after her arrival in Sicily. "She sleeps far from the land where her young hero died," says Thomas Moore, "but her heart is in his grave :"

She is far from the land where her young hero sleeps,
And lovers around her are sighing :
But coldly she turns from their gaze, and weeps,
For her heart in his grave is lying.

The Irish Melodies are the true title of Thomas Moore to immortality ; it is in them, says Byron, that he became entitled to imperishable glory ; they will live as long as Ireland, as long as poetry and music. In them, alone, does his flexible and graceful genius, bright and fragile at the same time, but with colours more brilliant than true, display real originality. The history of the Rebellion can be followed up in Moore's Melodies. The soul of a whole nation murmurs in his verses—her sorrows, her indignation, her vague and ardent hopes vibrate in them still, like a distant echo which repeats the deep wailing of the forest, shaken by the winds. Of those melodies the most beautiful are those he devoted to the memory of Robert Emmet.

The following, remarkable for the elegance and perfection

of the versification, is so well known that it is almost useless to give it here :—

Oh! breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade
Where cold and unhonour'd his relics are laid :
Sad, silent, and dark be the tears that we shed,
As the night-dew that falls on the grass o'er his head.

But the night-dew that falls, though in silence it weeps,
Shall brighten with verdure the grave where he sleeps ;
And the tear that we shed, though in secret it rolls,
Shall long keep his memory green in our souls.

In another of his poems, Thomas Moore, mixes up the two passions which animated the young hero,—addressing Ireland and Miss Curran as the same person, and asking them not to be ungrateful to the memory of one who died for them :

When he who adores thee has left but the name
Of his fault and his sorrows behind,
Oh! say wilt thou weep, when they darken the fame
Of a life that for thee was resign'd ?
Yes, weep, and however my foes may condemn,
Thy tears shall efface their decree ;
For heaven can witness, though guilty to them,
I have been but too faithful to thee, &c.

More, perhaps, even than by his talents, his courage, and his devotedness to his country, the memory of Robert Emmet is by the history of his love so tenderly preserved in Ireland. Thus the name of Heloise preserved the memory of Abelard in the minds of the people of Paris. The grave had scarcely closed over the two lovers when poetry and the legend took possession of their romantic and touching story. There is a modern song entitled the Lay of Miss Curran, which, in its artless style, is not wanting in grace and tenderness ;—it is the composition of Dr. Madden :

The joy of life lies here,
Robert a roon,

All that my soul held dear,
 Robert a roon.
 Spouse of my heart ! this shrine—
 “The long last home” of thine
 Hope’s, freedom’s, love’s and mine
 Robert a roon.

* * * *

The night is cold and chill,
 Robert a roon,
 My heart is colder still,
 Robert a roon.
 But sun will never shine
 Can warm the heart of mine !
 It’s almost cold as thine,
 Robert a roon.

Still would I linger here,
 Robert a roon,
 What home have I elsewhere ?
 Robert a roon.

Ah ! were I laid with thee
 How welcome death would be
 A bridal bed to me !
 Robert a roon, &c.

In America the memory of Robert Emmet was not less popular than in Ireland ; it is even yet venerated as that of a martyr. His portrait, in which he was represented tramping on the crown of England, was one of the sign-posts most frequently to be met with in America. At the epoch of the elections, he figured often on their banners, beside the portraits of General Jackson, Washington, and Franklin. “Even now,” says the *Nation*, “his speech is learned by heart in the schools. It is the gospel of the rebellion against England.” When we visit this wonderful work of a new born civilisation, we find vast plains, parts of

which only are cultivated, and cities rising up by enchantment on the shores of large rivers ; and should we enter into the huts of those Irish settlers, who have gone over by hundreds of thousands to seek for a less cruel fate in another clime, we should find over every fire-place the portrait and the speech of Robert Emmet, which are kept as a protection for their humble roof ; they have, like the savages of Meschacebe, taken the bones of their fathers with them to the foreign shores.

In 1834, a club was founded in New York, to celebrate the memory of Lord Edward Fitzgerald and the defenders of the liberty of Ireland. The 20th of September, the day of the execution of Robert Emmet, the room was hung in black, and all the members dressed in mourning, met, and assembled around a large portrait offered to the club by his family, and they drank in silence to his memory.

The fame of the talents and sufferings of Thomas Addis Emmet had preceded him to the United States, and obtained for him the most honourable reception. Received a member of the bar at New York, he was chosen by the Society of Friends to plead the cause of the slaves, and begun by an eloquent speech that brilliant career which was to be, at the same time, an honour for America and for his native country. (76) He became Attorney-General,

(76) "Thomas Addis Emmet," wrote Mr. Hayes, an eminent American lawyer, "is a light which illuminates our country afar ; simple, without vanity, without ambition, he walks through life in midst of the praises, the admiration, and the enthusiastic respect of a great and generous republic. His name resounds from New York even to the utmost valleys of the Mississippi."

Thomas Addis Emmet wrote, in the United States, a work entitled *An Essay towards the History of Ireland*, which forms the principal part of *Pieces of Irish History* by W. J. M'Nevin and T. A. Emmet.

and would have been a member of Congress had he desired.

It may, perhaps, be interesting to read a letter addressed by Thomas Addis Emmet to Mr. Burrowes, the defender of Robert Emmet, the passionate admirer of his eloquence, the former patriot of the House of Commons, who became a member of the English Administration in Ireland :—

“ I should be sincerely delighted, my dear friend, at your recent appointment, if I had not seen beside your name those of men of whom I cannot think without a deep feeling of disgust and indignation, whatever may have been formerly my friendship for them ; but you address me at the end of your letter a question, which I own would have much astonished me but for your habitual absence of mind : Do you intend some day to see us in Ireland ? or to send your children here ? an influential member of the Government asks an exile, an outlaw, whose return would immediately place him under sentence of death, this question. A man who would feel a wish to return would lose no time in answering what he might take for an advance ; but such is not my case. I am settled here with the best future prospects for myself and my children. My principles and my misfortunes have obtained for me the esteem and the friendship of the principal statesmen of this country and the entire Union. I am respected on account of my love and devotedness to these principles, in which I am more confirmed every day by experience and observation. Ought I go where these very principles are considered criminal, where they caused me to be condemned to eternal exile ? And then, my dear friend, I am too proud, after having been vanquished, to ornament with my presence the triumphal march of the victor. With what feelings would I return to Ireland ? I should tread upon graves there ; and what graves ! those of my nearest relations, of my dearest

friends ! No : I would not consent to return there, except under circumstances which could not be agreeable to those of my former friends, now attached to the Government. As for my children, I hope they will love liberty enough, never willingly to settle themselves in an enslaved country. There is no longer in Ireland a man bearing the name of Emmet, and I hope there never will be one as long as she remains united with England, and yet the name will, perhaps, be remembered in her history."

"England would do better," says Grattan, who publishes this letter, "not to send too many of such enemies to these quarters."

Thomas Addis Emmet died in 1827, in his sixty-fourth year. His funeral was celebrated with the same honours as Washington and Franklin's ; and on his tomb the following inscription was engraved in Latin and in English :—

To the Memory of Thomas Addis Emmet,
 who, honoured by his talents and his virtues,
 the policy and principles of the United Irishmen,
 for which,—
 mysterious fate of the just man on earth !—
 he was exiled from his native country:
 In America, the land of liberty,
 he found a second country,
 where his character was respected,
 and his genius admired.
 Desirous of perpetuating
 the name and the example of such a man,
 illustrious by his talents, his virtues,
 his sacrifices, and his perils,
 and the still greater calamities his relations endured
 for a just and holy cause,
 his grateful countrymen
 have raised this Monument.

VI.

It is not without a feeling of melancholy interest and self-reproach, that we contemplate to-day the noble wrecks of vanquished causes. Ireland, Poland, Hungary,—must we say Italy also? How many just causes have failed in this brilliant yet sad age of ours, whose future remains an impenetrable mystery? Intellect, great devotedness, sincere love of liberty, were not wanting in these generous nations. But success in this world, at least definitive success, is perhaps attained by qualities which are not of the first order. Clever merchants are more successful in their business than heroes or saints. We see every day the man who ruins himself equal or even superior to the man who makes his fortune beside him. Business, talent, and above all political instinct—that sagacity which discerns at once the real interest at stake, and knows how to sacrifice to that interest pride, passion, vanity, sometimes even (must it be said) honour and virtue—such seem to be the qualities which command success. The three nations, the happy revolutions of which shine forth as the beacon lights of humanity,—America, England, and the United Provinces,—possess to a high degree those particular faculties which preserve the institutions of free people as well as their conquests. It has been often remarked that such nations are generally merchants and conquerors. England has established for herself a free constitution, and she has finally taken possession of Ireland. The great democracy which rises up on the other side of the ocean, so jealous of her own liberty, does not seem much more respectful than her elder sister towards the rights of other nations and the interests of neighbouring states. The system of order, or rather of government, which makes

these three nations masters of their own realms, makes them often the oppressors of those who do not, like them, know how to defend their rights.

If it is permitted us so to speak to-day,—when every one is disposed to speak evil of his country, and at the same time making an honourable exception in his own favour,—France may claim the right to consider herself one of the first nations of the world, and may think of herself without too much vanity what all Europe thinks of her army. She is wrong, however, in one point, the most important of all in the eyes of Frenchmen. She has failed just where others have been successful. Is it not, perchance, because she is wanting in those qualities which command success? And yet, when it is necessary to speak or to write, who has more good sense than a Frenchman? This lively and brilliant nation conquered half of Europe, yet she has not kept her conquests; for the same reason perhaps she has let her liberties and her institutions escape from her hands. It seems as if some malignant genius had condemned her not to keep that which she well knows how to seize on by a rapid and impetuous bound.

Were we to listen to certain persons who delight in paradoxes, who delight in building theories on the accidents of a day, France never loved liberty, and that wonderful flower transplanted from a foreign clime has never been able to grow on an ungrateful soil. Let the illustrious dead of 1789 and 1830 protest from the depth of their tombs against this degrading assertion! Strange, indeed, in the age and in the country which have given birth to Malesherbes, Barnave, Mirabeau, de Lafayette, Madame de Staël, &c., and in our times to Royer-Collard, de Serre, General Foy, Casimir Périer, and to so many other grand souls departed, not to speak of those who are still living. What! France

has never cherished liberty? Who, then, has more resolutely embarked, like Christopher Columbus, on the faith of an idea, inspired by the pure love of justice and right? This noble passion can be traced even in her excesses. But, that this subject should be understood clearly, it would, perhaps, be necessary to make a distinction betwixt the pure love of liberty and its practical application, though the union of both may be essential to complete success. As to the practical application, our neighbours are our masters, and France must yet long draw instructions from England and the United States. To act with disdain, after her own repeated failures, would, on her part, be as ridiculous as it would be insane. At the risk of provoking a smile, it may however be affirmed that this nation, so incompetent in securing a result for herself, has, by her generous and disinterested love of liberty, rendered greater services to its sacred cause than England; and the nations of Europe, in their dreams of hope and a future, are justified in looking towards France. England herself, haughty as she is, has felt the influence of French liberalism, and it was to the Revolution of 1830 that the Whigs owed the Reform Bill.

In the practical sense of their own real interest, in an ability which is derived rather from instinct than from reflection, consists, it seems to me, the true, the great superiority of the Anglo-Saxon race over ours. Without adopting entirely the theory of races, so much in vogue to-day, it must be said that the Anglo-Saxon race, so admirably endowed with political judgment, are inclined to consider liberty as a privilege which they are proud to possess themselves, but which they do not care to extend to others. They would willingly say, with Corneille,

“La liberté n'est rien si tout le monde est libre.”

This offers, perhaps, an explanation of the scandalous spec-

tacle of a great Republic maintaining the last amongst civilised nations, the institution of slavery. I believe it would have been impossible to France, in the enjoyment of liberty, to keep her foot as England has done upon the neck of a neighbouring nation, and to have enjoyed herself this supreme good which she would have pitilessly refused to Ireland.

Who has not been involuntarily brought to compare the French Revolution of 1830 with that of England in 1688? Opinions, certainly, may differ on this subject; but an impartial judge, to whatever party he may belong, will not long hesitate between them. Was France obliged, in order to repulse the attacks of a despotic faction, to go in search of a foreign army? and did the ministers of Louis Philippe, like those of William III., conspire with the Court of Holyrood, and betray at once the two parties whose servants they were? The comparison might be carried still farther, and the disadvantages would not be on the side of France. It is not virtues nor talents in which she has been wanting, but that great practical sense, and marvellous tact which makes England slowly advance in the way of progress, giving way only when it becomes a necessity, and never risking all in an attempt to obtain all. Once, during the wars of the empire, a marshal entering into a conquered town demanded that a bed of silk and gold should be prepared for him to sleep in; some difficulties were started; "give me, then," said he, "a truss of straw;" and he was satisfied. Such is the history of France, after her impetuous and premature struggles to attain an ideal which escapes her hold, disheartened and discouraged, she resigns herself to accept the most humble conditions. Perhaps the different qualities of the two countries have never been more clearly demonstrated than in recent events. During the Eastern war,

which nation displayed most intelligence and the greatest activity? Which obtained most honour in the admiration of Europe? France, unquestionably. Which nation in the end will profit most by the results of the war? Perhaps not France. Strange, indeed, that people whose peculiar vanity fears above all to play the part of dupe are precisely those who expose themselves to that misfortune by want of a little foresight and political ability. Unfortunately, if experience teaches men, it rarely teaches nations. And even men, what do they learn from experience? What is true of a people is also true of individuals: that which is called the fatality of their destiny is most frequently but the fatality of their characters.

Let us return to Robert Emmet. He was, during his lifetime, as all party men are, very diversely judged; little by little however, as time passes on and passions cool down, more justice is done to his memory. We have brought forward his cause and examined it. With the public, it rests to determine whether it must decide against him or not. But, however his enterprise may be judged, the reader, I believe, will consider that he was gifted with a singular union of happy qualities. The brilliancy of his talents, the ingenuity and generosity of his mind, the candour and generosity of his nature, the heroic delicacy of his heart at the moment of its supreme struggle with adversity, render him the object of a tender and respectful interest. But the originality of his nature, at once vigorous and refined, consists above all in the union of the Irish and English blood; the ardour of imagination and of passion being blended in him with so much strength of mind and peace of soul. Undaunted in his relations with the great, tender-hearted with the feeble and the oppressed, he belongs to the race of popular heroes, the *élite* of mankind; sprung, like the

Gracchi in antiquity, from the ranks of the upper classes, they conceive a passion for the cause of the people, and devote themselves to its service. Unhappily, their story is too often that of the young hero of Ireland ; compromised by the violence and incapacity of those who follow them, they fall into the hands of a Norbury or a Castle-reagh, and are thus crushed between two forces. Chief of an insurrection, Emmet was free from those vices with which revolutionists are sometimes reproached,—impatience of all rule, hatred of social superiors, indifference to the choice of means. Must we admit with those who were superior to him in prudence, that more chivalrous than politic he was deficient in wisdom and in judgment ? Two sorts of persons are interested in depreciating those who have thus uselessly sacrificed their lives—first, their vanquishers, and next, the submissive vanquished, who, unwilling to recommence useless struggles, discard as a troublesome *souvenir* everything that might recal them to mind. (77) In fact, it is but too certain that Robert Emmet was deceived in evoking “ that delicate and terrible right which slumbers at

(77) The author of the remarkable article from which we have already borrowed several quotations, Judge Johnson, wrote thus in 1825: “ It is the history of patriotism when it passes the level of ordinary intelligence to draw down on itself the vengeance of the power it has provoked, and to be feebly supported by timid friends. Persecuted on one side, abandoned on the other, genius rises alone like the ruins of Palmyra in the desert, and borrows I know what not of solemnity from the desolation which surrounds it. Ought, then, no resistance be made to tyranny till men shall have learned to know and to defend their rights ? Will they ever learn except from some messenger of the truth who teaches them the way of salvation by his martyrdom ? ’Tis not in vain that Providence has implanted in the heart of man the instinct of resistance to oppression.”—*Robert Emmet and his Contemporaries*.

the foot of all our institutions." The bold stroke which he dared to strike might indeed have succeeded as it had miscarried. But he augured for his country a destiny at a future day which that country was unable to realise. We must not, however, forget that at the moment of his death he was scarcely twenty-five; and what man, however superior, can go back to the sentiments that animated him at that early age, without recollecting that he has been more than once under the influence of a passion, susceptible of illusions and chimeras? There may be, in early youth, a certain want of equilibrium between the faculties, but this in no way proves the absence of these qualities. When the imagination is strong, it hides the reality. Energy is akin to exaltation, says Monsieur Cousin, and exaltation is almost a sublime madness. In every true hero there is something of the hero of romance, and our greatest qualities find a compensation in their excess. Doubtless, nothing would have been wanting in this rich nature when a mature age had brought with it what no talents can supply—experience. The moral of this short history should be, perhaps, that very young men would do better not to mix themselves up with any conspiracy, however just the cause. Unfortunately, there is a proverb which says: "If young men had sense enough, and old men strength enough, all might be well;"—and when we arrive at an age when we have learned to our misfortune the sad chances of fate, our ardour is already past,—that ardour which is necessary to make us risk what must be risked for success. To submit to circumstances is, assuredly, a virtue; but a virtue so easily practised that it can claim but little admiration; but that impulse of the soul which makes us discard all the gifts of fortune, to brave tyranny with contempt for every peril, is also a virtue; and of those two virtues

which is the more rare ? A whole generation disappears from the stage of the world, and lies mouldering in the tomb ; let us then ask whose lot is most to be envied, that of the young man who is cut off in the flower of his age—

Et meurt en vaincu, meme en butte à l'insulte ;
Mais n'ayant pas douté des objets de son culte—

or of those who, after having outlived all their illusions, have contented themselves with demanding from the Government of the country but a tent to shelter them in their inglorious repose.

The cause of liberty is eternal as that of justice. It counts in every age, in every country, its soldiers and its martyrs ; but, for those who are worsted in the strife, posterity is often as unjust as their cotemporaries. It is too apt to be, like them, a worshipper of force and success, and as little careful to gather with respect those golden threads that shine at intervals through the dark annals of humanity. The contemplation of those whom fortune loads with her favours, excite in the breast of man some interest for those with whom she deals harshly. The pages of history should be the last refuge of the unfortunate and of the vanquished. It may be inscribed in the book of fate that nations like sovereigns should often enjoy in peace the price of their crimes, but that history at least sees them and judges them. If the despotic monarchy and the Stuarts had triumphed in England, the popular names of Hampden, of Russell, of Algernon Sydney, would be as little known as those of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, of Robert Emmet, and Theobald Wolfe Tone, and would only live in the memory of a few proud and faithful minds.

Must then the future have crowned their cause with success to obtain for these illustrious victims the homage of respectful sympathy ? Are tears due only to the martyrs

of victory? And yet would she not be entitled to count among her children these generous minds, she, that noble vanquished one of history, the France of '89;

“Divine Juliette au cercueil étendue,”

and destined like her to awaken one day? It was at her school that they learned to love humanity, and to respect the rights of conscience. Perhaps the French public, the sure and delicate arbiters of all renown, may be tempted to interest themselves in the defenders of a cause which, in their days of pride, they called their own.

THE following lines, written some years ago, as yet it is believed unpublished, though so popular that the very children know them by heart, will be read with pleasure. The verse is beautiful, and the sentiments true and touching.

On the Uninscribed Tomb

OF

ROBERT EMMET.

“PRAY, tell me,” I said to an old man who stray’d
 Drooping over the graves which his own hand had made,
 “Pray, tell me the name of the tenant who sleeps
 Beneath yonder lone stone, where the sad willow weeps;
 Every stone is engraved with the name of the dead,
 But, yon blank slab declares not whose spirit is fled.”

In silence he bowed, then he beckoned me nigh,
 Till we stood o’er the grave—then he said with a sigh:
 “Yes, they dare not to trace e’en a word on this stone,
 To the memory of him who sleeps coldly and lone;
 He told them—commanded—the lines o’er his grave
 Should never be traced by the hand of a slave.

“He bade them to shade e’en his name in the gloom,
 Till the morning of freedom should dawn on his tomb;
 ‘When the flag of my country for liberty flies
 Then, then let my name and my monument rise!’
 You see they obeyed him—’tis thirty-two years
 And they come still to moisten his grave with their tears.

“ He was young, like yourself, and aspired to o’erthrow
The tyrants, who filled his loved island with woe ;
They crushed his bold spirit—this earth was confined
Too scant for the range of his luminous mind.”
He paused, and the old man went slowly away,
And I felt as he left me an impulse to pray.

“ Grant heaven ! I may see, ere my own days are done,
A monument rise o’er my country’s last son,
And, oh ! proudest task, be it mine to indite
The long delay’d tribute a freeman must write ;
Till then shall its theme in my heart deeply dwell,
So, peace to thy slumber, dear shade, fare-thee-well.”



